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DEVELOPMENT IN ESKIMO PLAY

by



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The undersigned certify that they have read, and
recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance
a thesis entitled "Development in Eskimo Play," submitted by
Karen F. Danielson in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to test a hypothetical schema which described the development of play, by applying the schema to the play activities of the Canadian Eskimos. The classes in the schema were, in consecutive order, experimental play, symbolic play, predetermined play, collective play, adapted play and standardized play. Standardization of activities was not discussed in the literature on Eskimo play.

Discussions of the characteristics of the activities in each of the other classes, and the discussion of the suitability of the schema, led to the definition of several areas which required further investigation, but may have provided very useful information.

The separateness of play from everyday life, was one of these areas requiring further investigation. Huizinga considered play to be quite consciously outside ordinary life but in the Eskimo culture, the areas of play, storytelling, art, drama, religion, and dance were very interdependent. The degree to which these activities were consciously separate from each other could possibly be determined from linguistic studies.

The absence of individual activities involving chance, suggested that it may be worthwhile to investigate the development of the concept of chance. It is conceivable that the chance element in activities was first attributed to a real opponent, and later abstracted.

Rules, other than those used to control the interpersonal relationships in everyday life, were developed for some Eskimo activities. Longitudinal and cross-cultural studies could be performed to discover sequences of rules development and cultural differences in rules development.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. The Concept of Play

...play is a function of the living, but it is not susceptible of exact definition either logically, biologically, or aesthetically. The play-concept must always remain distinct from all the other forms of thought in which we express the structure of mental and social life. Hence we shall have to confine ourselves to describing the characteristics of play.¹

Huizinga considered play to be an "absolutely primary category of life, familiar to everybody at a glance right down to the animal level".² In English, the essence of play is characterized by the term "fun" which can not be reduced further. Play therefore has to be understood and evaluated as a totality.³

Although he could not define play exactly, the main characteristics of play could be described. Huizinga restricted his description to the social manifestations of play which he recognized as belonging primarily to the higher forms of play,⁴

¹Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens, A Study of the Play Element in Culture, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950), p. 7.

²Ibid., p. 3.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 7.

and he summed up the formal characteristics of play.

a free activity standing quite consciously outside "ordinary" life as being "not serious", but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their difference from the common world by disguise or other means.⁵

Huizinga was arguing for recognition of the nature and significance of play, and against the assumption of his predecessors, that "play must serve something which is not play" such as by satisfying a need for relaxation, or by training young creatures for serious work that life will require later on.⁶

He then defined two basic aspects of play in the higher forms; contest and representation.⁷

Later he commented:

...all the basic factors of play, both individual and communal, are already present in animal life--to wit, contests, performances,

⁵Ibid., p. 13.

⁶Ibid., p. 2.

⁷Ibid., p. 13.

exhibitions, challenges, preenings, struttings and showings-off, pretences and binding rules. ... Thus competitions and exhibitions as amusements do not proceed from culture, they rather precede it.⁸

Callois however gave equal importance to two additional aspects of play, chance and vertigo.⁹ The former Huizinga gave little importance to¹⁰ while the latter was not a social factor and Huizinga's interest was in social manifestations. Chance activities however, were not found in animal play and by recognizing them as equally important, Callois challenges Huizinga's argument that play precedes culture and that human civilization has added no essential feature to the general idea of play.¹¹

Although Huizinga argued for the recognition of the nature and significance of play, he did not equate it with cultural phenomena. He stated that physical, intellectual, moral or spiritual values could equally well raise play to the cultural level, because they could "raise the tone, the intensity

⁸Ibid., p. 47.

⁹Roger Callois, "The Structure and Classification of Games," Diogenes, XII (1955), pp. 62-75.

¹⁰Huizinga, op. cit., pp. 47-8.

¹¹Ibid., p. 1.

of life".¹² Then he stated that civilization grows in and as play in the two ever-recurrent forms of the sacred performance and the festal contest.

In the case of games of chance, he stated that for the development of culture, they were unproductive.

They are sterile, adding nothing to life or the mind. The picture changes as soon as play demands application, knowledge, skill, courage and strength. The more "difficult" the game the greater the tension in the beholders. A game of chess may fascinate the onlookers although it still remains unfruitful for culture and devoid of visible charm. But once a game is beautiful to look at its cultural value is obvious; nevertheless its aesthetic value is not indispensable to culture.¹³

Huizinga saw the play element gradually receding into the background, and being absorbed in the sacred sphere or crystallized as knowledge in folklore, poetry, philosophy, and the various forms of judicial and social life.¹⁴ In contrast, Mitchell and Mason recognized the play element in all spheres of life.

We no longer try to define the term "play" by certain specific activities, but, on the

¹²Ibid., p. 1.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 46.

contrary, we define it as an attitude of mind which may pervade any given human activity.¹⁵

There is a substantial similiarity between this and the idea expressed by Plato.

God alone is worthy of supreme seriousness, but man is made God's plaything, and that is the best part of him. Therefore every man and woman should live life accordingly, and play the noblest games and be of another mind from what they are at present. ...For they deem war a serious thing, though in war there is neither play nor culture worthy the name... which are the things we deem most serious. Hence all must live in peace as well as they possibly can. What, then, is the right way of living? Life must be lived as play, playing certain games, making sacrifices, singing and dancing, and then a man will be able to propitiate the gods, and defend himself¹⁶ against his enemies and win in the contest.

II. Types of Play

An important concept was expressed by Huizinga when he stated that play was a significant function¹⁷ and the contemporary approach to play as an attitude, is a further definition of this significance. Likewise, the two basic aspects of

¹⁵Elmer D. Mitchell and Bernard S. Mason, The Theory of Play (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1948), p. 105.

¹⁶Huizinga, op. cit., pp. 18-19, citing Plato, Laws VII 796.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 1.

play defined by Huizinga, contest and representation, have been given further consideration.

An earlier writer, Groos, detected a major distinction between what he called "playful experimentation" and "the playful exercise of impulses of the second or socionomic order".¹⁸ Callois perceived four motives of play, agon (competition), alea (chance), mimicry (pretense) and ilinx (vertigo).¹⁹ Roberts, Arth and Bush suggested the two major divisions of games and amusements, and games were subdivided into physical skill, strategy, and chance.²⁰ The Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland suggested the following system of classification:

1. Games of movement that incidently or purposefully develop and exercise the bodily powers, such as games of agility, strength, endurance, skill and the like.

2. Games of dexterity which exercise the memory and develop manual dexterity, such as string figures and tricks.

3. Games of skill and calculation with

¹⁸Karl Groos, The Play of Man (New York: Appleton-Century Co., 1901), p. 4.

¹⁹Callois, op. cit., pp. 74-5.

²⁰J. M. Roberts, M. J. Arth and R. R. Bush, "Games in Culture", American Anthropologist, LXI (August, 1959), pp. 597-605.

apparatus (chess) or without (morra).

4. Games of chance, with particulars of the dice, other apparatus, and stakes; beliefs connected with chance.

5. Amusements with animals - include baiting tame or captured animals, and setting animals to fight.

6. Dancing and dramatic acting are often practiced for amusement.

7. Shows and professional performances.

8. Round games - simple amusements in which singing is a frequent accompaniment.

9. Toys - may be simple, such as dolls, tops and balls; others²¹ imitate the contrivances of grown up people.

Salter divided activities into games and pastimes. These were further subdivided into individual or group pastimes and group or team games. All of the activities were classified according to pursuit, dexterity, strategy, enigma, chance, vertigo, imitation and exultation.²² Jones, who worked in combination with Salter used the same eight classes.²³

²¹Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Notes and Queries on Anthropology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1960), p. 334.

²²M. Salter, "Games and Pastimes of the Australian Aboriginal", Unpublished Master's Thesis, (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1967), pp. 7-8.

²³Kevin G. Jones, "Games and Physical Activities of the Ancient Polynesians and Relationship to Culture", Unpublished Master's Thesis (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1967), pp. 5-7.

Lansley developed a system of classification about which he made the following comment:

This particular classification attempts to place games according to the four major observable characteristics of basic organization, the situation in which they are played, the body movements involved and the internal properties of which constitute the activity. Each of the four characteristics are subdivided into a number of observable possibilities so that each activity may be placed in all²⁴ of the four major sections of the system.

Lansley's system begins as Salter's does with a play activity being either a game or a pastime and if a game it is either team or individual, while a pastime is group or individual. These classes form the level of basic organization. The situation may be terrestrial, aquatic, or aerial. The body movement may be propulsive, explosive, rhythmic, regulated, complex or stationary. The internal characteristics include pursuit, chance, strategy, dexterity, enigma, vertigo, muscular strength and endurance, cardiovascular endurance and simulation.²⁵ He also noted that other levels may be added such as material aids.²⁶

²⁴Kieth L. Lansley, "The Contribution of Play Activities to the Survival of Traditional Culture in four Melanesian Societies", Unpublished Master's Thesis, (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1968), p. 175.

²⁵Ibid., p. 176.

²⁶Ibid., p. 180.

Looking at a system such as Lansley's enables one to comprehend in a general way, what has been done by creating all these systems of classification. Important characteristics of the activities were recognized by the various authors. Some such as Huizinga, realized that they were referring to social aspects or the equipment or the personal qualities or other aspects of play, while some others seem to have made suggestions which they intuitively felt were correct. In many cases therefore, no reasons were given for proposing particular classifications. This does not mean however, that the classifications were not valid, and it is interesting to note that the distinction between individual and social activities was given some logical basis by Piaget as can be seen below.

Piaget studied the play of childhood, while many of the above studies are related to primitive cultures. The play of childhood is often compared to the play of primitive man. According to Huizinga, "archaic society ... plays as the child or animal plays".²⁷

²⁷ Huizinga, op. cit., p. 17.

Assuming that there is some truth in such a statement, it is worthwhile to compare the above studies with this study of the play of children.

Piaget outlined three major categories which represented successive forms of play in childhood and these three forms reflected the successive development from sensory motor to representational to reflective intelligence.²⁸

The classification system was based on his concept of the equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation in every act of intelligence.²⁹

He stated that:

while imitation is a continuation of accommodation for its own sake, it might be said conversely that play is essentially assimilation, or the primacy of assimilation over accommodation.³⁰

This concept is best expressed by the following quotation from his work.

It is, however, essential to emphasise, in conclusion, that although imitation always depends on intelligence it is in no way identical with it. As we have just reminded our readers, intelligence tends toward permanent equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation. For instance, in order to

²⁸Jean Piaget, *Play Dreams and Imitation in Childhood* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co. Inc., 1962) P. 113.

²⁹Ibid., p. 87.

³⁰Ibid.

draw an objective towards him by means of a stick, the child must assimilate both the stick and objective to the schema of prehension and that of movement through contact, and he must also accommodate these schemas to the objects, their length, distance, etc., in accordance with the causal order hand-stick-objective. Imitation, on the contrary, is the continuation of accommodation, of which it is the "positive" and to which it therefore subordinates assimilation. For instance, imitation will reproduce the motion made by the stick in reaching the objective, the movement of the hand thus being determined by those of the stick and the objective (which is by definition accommodation), without the hand actually affecting the objects (which would be assimilation). There is however, a third possibility, that of assimilation per se. Let us assume, for instance that the stick does not reach its objective and that the child consoles himself by hitting something else, or that he suddenly becomes interested in moving the stick for its own sake, or that when he has no stick he takes a piece of paper and applies the schema of the stick to it for fun. In such cases there is a kind of free assimilation, without accommodation to spatial conditions or to the significance of the objects. This is simply play, in which reality is subordinated to assimilation which is distorting, since there is no accommodation. Intelligent adaptation, imitation and play are thus the three possibilities, and they result according as there is stable equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation or primacy³¹ of one of these two tendencies over the other.

Thus, according to Piaget, play is primarily assimilation, or the incorporation of reality into the individual, while accommodation or the adjustment

³¹Ibid., pp. 85-6.

of the individual to reality is imitation. Intelligence involves the balance between these two tendencies.

Piaget stated that primitive play is at first almost identical with the first set of motor behaviors, but it includes only "those behaviors which no longer need new accommodation and are reproduced purely for 'functional pleasure',³²" He continued:

But with the interiorization of schemas, play becomes more distinct from the adaptive behaviors properly so-called (intelligence), and tends toward assimilation as such. ... Finally, with the socialization of the child, play acquires rules or gradually adapts symbolic imagination to reality in the form of constructions which are still spontaneous but which imitate reality. In these two forms the individual symbol yields to the collective rule, or to the objective or representational symbol, or to both.³³

He proposed a classification system because "every methodical analysis involves three distinct, successive stages: classification, discovery of laws, and causal explanations".³⁴ He criticizes previously developed classifications based on content (the function of the game) or origin because they depend

³²Piaget refers here to K. Buhler's "Funktionslust".

³³Piaget., op. cit., p. 87.

³⁴Ibid., p. 105.

on preconceived interpretations. Piaget concluded that it is necessary to analyze "the structures presented in each game: the degree of mental complexity, from the elementary sensory-motor game to the advanced social game".³⁵

Two other authors were recognized for having used a structural classification. Stern placed games into two large classes: individual and social.³⁶ Charlotte Buhler divided children's games into five groups: functional games (sensory motor), games of make-believe or illusion, passive games, constructional games, and collective games.³⁷

From a discussion of the various classifications, Piaget concluded that "there are three main types of structure which characterize children's games and determine their detailed classification. There are practice games, symbolic games, and games with rules, while constructional games constitute the transition from all three to adapted behaviors".³⁸

³⁵ Ibid., p. 108.

³⁶ Ibid., from Psychol D. fruh. Kindheit, 4th ed., p. 278 seq.).

³⁷ Ibid., p. 109, from Kindheit a Jugend., 3rd ed., pp. 129-146 and pp. 229-231.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 110.

The three classes of games are related to the three successive forms of intelligence; sensory motor, representational and reflective. Constructive games occupy "at the second, and more particularly at the third level, a position half-way between play and intelligent work or between play and imitation".³⁹

Following is a summary of the classification system presented by Piaget.⁴⁰

Practice games. These ludic exercises, which are the child's first form of play are predominant in the first eighteen months when almost all the sensory-motor schemas acquired by the child give rise to functional assimilation on the fringe of the process of adaptation. They are found in the case of the older child and adult when new behavior is practiced for the sake of practice.

Mere practice games were those which were purely sensory-motor. Reproduction in its entirety, of a behavior adapted to a useful function, but which is repeated by the child, out of its usual context just for the pleasure of exercising his power identified play of this type, for example, asking "why" repeatedly.

³⁹Ibid., p. 113.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 113-46.

Games in the sub-class fortuitous combinations, had some bearing on thought itself. They were new combinations of activity which were ludic from the start, for example, especially when given a new toy.

The aim of the class of play, intentional combinations, was ludic from the beginning. This type quickly developed into symbolic or constructive play, for example, arranging rows or other patterns.

Symbolic games. In stage I, type IA, projection of symbolic schemas on to new objects was involved, for example, saying "cry, cry" to a dog and crying for the dog. Type IB was characterised by the projection of imitative schemas on to new objects. In these games there was again projection of symbolic schemas, but schemas borrowed from models which had been imitated, and no longer from the child's own activity, for example, pretending to telephone, with a leaf instead of a receiver.

Type IIA was simple identification of one object with another, the word "simple" being used to distinguish these from the following types in which there was a reproduction of whole scenes or new symbolic combinations. An example was moving an empty box and calling it a motorcar.

Type IIB involved identification of the

child's body with that of other people or with things, for example, crawling on all fours saying "meow".

Type IIIA involved simple combinations, beginning with the transposition of real scenes and gradually developing more widely. The construction of whole scenes took place instead of isolated imitations or mere assimilation of one object to another, for example, pretending to prepare a bath for a younger brother, using a blade of grass for the thermometer, and a box for the tub, or pretending to be a friend.⁴¹

Type IIIB involved compensatory combinations where is was a question of correcting reality rather than reproducing it for pleasure, for example, when forbidden to hold a younger member of the family, a child pretended to do so.

Type IIIC included liquidating combinations wherein the child when faced with an unpleasant situation would try to relive it by transposing it symbolically in order to accept it, for example,

⁴¹At this level it is no longer possible to subdivide games according to the predominance of assimilation (A) or imitation of others (B) because of increasingly complex interaction. A,B,C & D here are therefore types of increasing complexity.

for example, when afraid to sit on a new chair, a doll was put there by the child, and the conversation from when the child had been seated on the chair was repeated to the doll.

Type IVD included anticipatory symbolic combinations, when there was again, a kind of liquidation in accepting an order or advice, but there was also symbolic anticipation of the consequences which would ensue had the advice been rejected or the order disobeyed. When warned of something such as slipping on a loose stone, a child, in anticipation produced a reconstruction applied to an imaginary companion. For example, "Marecage once trod on a stone, you know, and didn't take care, and she slipped and hurt herself badly".

During stage II, from the age of four to seven, the symbolic games, the main forms of which have just been described at their peak period, began to lose their importance. It was not that they were less numerous, or less intensely felt, but rather that the symbol, by closer adaptation to reality, lost its distorting ludic character, and approximated to a straight forward imitative representation of reality. The symbolic games of this new period were distinguished by three

characteristics: orderliness of the ludic constructions, an increasing desire for verisimilitude and exact imitation of reality, and the appearance of collective symbolism properly so-called, with differentiation and adjustment of roles; for example games of shopping and organizing a house or village.

Stage III, between the ages of seven and twelve, was associated with a definite decline in symbolism and a rise of either games with rules, or symbolic constructions which were progressively less distorting and more nearly related to adapted work, for example, making cartographic models with as much attention to detail as though they were the maps of real countries.

Games with rules. These rarely occurred before the ages of four to seven, and they belonged mainly to the ages of seven to eleven. They remained and developed throughout life, while practice games for example, playing with ones wireless set, and symbolic games such as telling oneself a story, were rare. The explanation of this late appearance and protracted continuation of games with rules, was according to Piaget, very simple. "They are the ludic activity of the

socialized being".⁴² The symbol replaced mere practice as soon as thought made its appearance, and likewise, the rule replaced the symbol and integrated practice as soon as certain social relationships were formed. Two categories could be distinguished, those which were handed down, for example, the game of marbles, and those which were spontaneous, for example, groups of boys playing at jumping as many as possible of the school stairs. They would develop rules such as, anyone who falls loses, and turns are counted only if one starts from the right step.

Discussing the reasons for the increase or decrease in various types of play, Piaget commented:

While practice games are the first to appear, they are also the most liable, since they are vicarious: they appear with each new acquirement and disappear after saturation.⁴³

They disappeared either because they were reintegrated into adapted activity, they became symbolic, or they became collective after the first few years of life.

⁴²Ibid., p. 142.

⁴³Ibid., p. 144.

Symbolic games decline after the age of four.... because the more the child adapts himself to the natural and social world the less he indulges in symbolic distortions and transpositions, because instead of assimilating the external world to the ego he progressively subordinates the ego to reality.⁴⁴

Three reasons for the diminution of this type of game were: first, as the child grows older, more opportunities for satisfying the need for expansion of the ego are found in real life, for example, compensation, liquidation or even a mere continuation of real life with dolls; secondly, the games may become games with rules; and thirdly, the child increasingly attempts to adjust to reality as he gets older, rather than to assimilate. This determined how far the distorting symbol was transformed into an imitative image, and how far imitation itself was incorporated into intelligent or effective adaptation.⁴⁵

The prevalence of play in childhood is due to the absence of equilibrium between assimilation to the ego, and social life.⁴⁶ Piaget stated that games with rules "increase in number, both absolutely and relatively, with age".⁴⁷

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 145.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 144-45.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 168.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 146.

Referring to the criteria of play, Piaget denied that play was a behavior per se, or one particular type of activity among others.

It is determined by a certain orientation of the behavior, or by a general "pole" of the activity, each particular action being characterized by its greater or lesser proximity to the pole and by the kind of equilibrium between the polarized tendencies.⁴⁸

Thus an activity could be regarded as play, depending upon the degree to which it approximated pure assimilation.

Piaget's classification system gave full consideration to the mental complexity of play which he defined as the primacy of assimilation over accommodation. He produced three major classes, practice games, symbolic games, and games with rules; which were related to the three successive stages of intelligence development, sensory motor, representational and reflective.

III. Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to analyze the literature on the play activities of the Canadian Eskimos, and to arrange the information in a manner which it was hypothesized, would provide a better understanding of the development of play.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 163.

As Mitchell and Mason stated, the study of the play of preliterate peoples can aid in the understanding of the nature of the play of mankind in general.⁴⁹ Information on the sequence of development of play, enables one to distinguish more clearly what is basic to the nature of play, and what has been altered in play as cultures have developed.

In addition to this theoretical problem there was the practical one of collecting together, information on the play activities of the Canadian Eskimos. According to Zuk, a knowledge of Eskimo play is important for teachers of northern children and also for persons engaged in cultural restoration.⁵⁰

IV. Limitation of the Play Concept

The changes in the concept of play presented a problem for this study. The current definitions of play, refer to it as an attitude⁵¹ while the literature on Eskimo play, except for that written more recently,

⁴⁹Mitchell and Mason, op. cit., p. 12.

⁵⁰William M. Zuk, Eskimo Games (Ottawa: Curriculum Section, Education Division, Northern Administration Branch, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1967), p. 1.

⁵¹Mitchell and Mason, op. cit., p. 15.

included descriptions of what were considered by the authors to be "play activities".

The phenomenon of play is seen in contemporary man and also in animals. While the "attitude" definition may be satisfactory for contemporary man, it is less adequate for animals. Animal play is easily distinguished from non-play by its uselessness in providing the basic needs of food clothing and shelter. The play of primitive man may be regarded as somewhere between these two.

One obvious example of greater complexity in the play of primitive man than animals, exists in the mixing of religious and play activities. Those activities slightly affected by religion were generally regarded as play activities by authors dealing with the Eskimo situation, but others with many play qualities were regarded as religious. Dance was often a complex mixture of these qualities.

Huizinga, in his discussion of the play concept as expressed in language remarked that:

One culture has abstracted a general notion of play much earlier and more completely than another, with the curious result that there are highly developed languages which have retained totally different words for the various play-forms and that this multiplicity of terms has itself impeded the aggregation of all the forms under one head. One is reminded here of the well-known fact that some of the

so-called primitive languages have words for the different species of a common genus, as for eel and pike, but none for fish.⁵²

Carpenter suggested that the Eskimo never worked.

Eskimo never work. All their activities involve total commitment of all the senses simultaneously. Like children, they play. There are no Eskimo flag-pole sitters, no assembly-line specialists⁵³: hence no need for rewards or recreation.

Unlike children however, the Eskimo adult was responsible for maintaining the existence of his dependents and himself and when his activity did not contribute to this end, many authors described this activity as play.

Consideration must be given to the changes which have taken place; first, the formation of a play concept, and secondly, the altering of that concept. Even the definition of play as an attitude, is improved by allowing for the existence of some activities which are more closely associated with the play attitude than other activities. In the literature covered for this study, these activities strongly associated with the play attitude were the only ones which many authors dealt with in relation to their discussions on play, because their under-

⁵²Huizinga, op. cit., p. 29.

⁵³Edmund Carpenter, Man and Art in the Arctic (Montana: Museum of the Plains Indian, 1964), p. 11.

standing of the play concept was not the broader one of an attitude. The most accessible material was therefore that which dealt with these activities.

For the purposes of this study it was decided that the activities which were discussed in the literature as play activities would be covered. Presumably these were activities which were strongly associated with the play attitude and were non-productive of the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter. In cases of the mixture of religious and play activities, only those which were affected by religion in a minor way were covered. Dance and celebrations were omitted for this reason and also because they were such large topics, they could not be covered adequately. In cases where activities normally regarded as work were referred to as play, the activities were omitted as they were generally so broad in scope they did not serve to limit the subject matter so that it could be studied effectively. An example was Harper's statement, "of course hunting is the prime pastime as well as the livelihood of an Eskimo".⁵⁴ Such statements were infrequent however and they occurred only in the more recent literature as a result of the

⁵⁴Francis Harper, Caribou Eskimos of the Upper Kazan River, Keewatin (Kansas: The Allen Press, 1964), p. 25.

result of the awareness of a play attitude.

V. Definition of the Terms

Play activities. The play activities which were included in this study were those which were discussed under headings such as recreational, games or pastimes by the authors cited. Such activities may be defined as those which did not contribute to the production of the physical necessities of food, clothing, and shelter and were strongly associated with a play attitude. Activities of a religious nature were omitted except in cases where the significance of religion was considered to be minor.

Canadian Eskimos. The Eskimo subcultures which were included under the term Canadian Eskimo were from west to east, the Mackenzie, Copper, Netsilik, Caribou, Iglulik, Baffin Land and Labrador Eskimos.

Experimental play. The experimental play activities were the individual spontaneous activities with no predetermined structure.

Predetermined play. These activities were those which were goal oriented, the end result of the activity being set beforehand.

Collective play. Collective play activities were characterised by intentional interaction between the players so that they either helped, hindered, or depended upon each other.

Standardized play. These activities were those with a constant form which was agreed upon by different groups of people.

VI. Methods and Procedures

The literature was first reviewed to obtain information about the play activities of the Canadian Eskimos. The information about each activity was then summarized in one account and classified as one of the types of play defined above. General information about Eskimo play was presented in chapter two, while the descriptions of the activities were presented in chapters three through eight. The development of play activities and the suitability of the proposed system for describing the

development of play was discussed in chapter nine.

CHAPTER II

THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF ESKIMO PLAY

The following description of the circumstances in which Eskimo play occurs, is presented in two parts. The first part contains several comments about the life of the adult Eskimo. No attempt has been made to outline all the various aspects of their culture. The information was included to describe the setting in which the play activities took place.

The second part of the chapter is a description of Eskimo childhood. This is separated because the life of the child and the conditions under which children played were quite different from adult life and play conditions. Children were in a different phase of life and they often played at activities which were work for their parents.

I. Adult Eskimo Life

A typical evening in a Central Eskimo community was described by Boas.

All the work being finished, boots and stockings are changed, as they must be dried and mended. The men visit one another and spend the night in talking, singing,

gambling, and telling stories. The events of the day are talked over, success in hunting is compared, the hunting tools requiring mending are set in order, and the lines are dried and softened. Some busy themselves in cutting new ivory implements and seal lines or in carving. They never spend the nights quite alone, but meet for social entertainment. During these visits the host places a large lump of frozen meat and a knife on the side bench behind the lamp and every one is welcome to help himself to as much as he likes.

The first comers sit down on the ledge, while those entering later stand or squat in the passage. When any one addresses the whole assembly he always turns his face to the wall and avoids facing the listeners. Most of the men take off their outer jacket in the house and they sit chatting until very late. Even the young children do not go to bed early.

The women sit on the bed in front of their lamps with their legs under them, working continuously on their own clothing or on that of the men.¹

Various circumstances, including the two or three day blizzards or taboos against working, provide the Eskimo with extended periods of free time. Birket-Smith thus found that long periods of time were spent lying or sitting on the igloo platform, sleeping or talking.² Carpenter described the Eskimo in such circumstances in the following manner:

¹Franz Boas, The Central Eskimo (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), p. 156.

²Edmund Carpenter, Man and Art in the Arctic (Montana: Museum of the Plains Indian, 1964), p. 6.

The question, "What is the silent igloo-sitter thinking?" misses the point. Early ethnologists believed he was in a self-induced trance; Freudians said he was suppressing anxieties. Both assumed an inner dialogue. But inner dialogue, far from being universal, is largely the product of literacy. It belongs to literate man whose mind is a never-ending clock which his will cannot still, madness only makes go faster, and death alone silences. I don't believe the silent Eskimo with impassive, tribal face is thinking anything. He's just not "with it" and "it" means all senses, action, especially hunting, which he loves above all else.³

After a successful caribou hunt when the Eskimos feasted and idled for two days, gorging themselves and engaging in various pastimes, Jenness described the principle reason for their delay as a subconscious one. It was that the sustained effort in hunting involved a mental strain to which they were unaccustomed.⁴

Four factors affecting the development of Eskimo play were outlined by Zuk. The long cold arctic winter, the prolonged period of darkness, the interests of the people, and the restricted space in the igloos were considered as major factors which influenced the nature of the play activities.⁵

³Edmund Carpenter, Man and Art in the Arctic (Montana: Museum of the Plains Indian, 1964), p. 6.

⁴Diamond Jenness, The People of the Twilight (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), pp. 161-2.

⁵William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 1.

Several characteristics of Eskimo play were noted in the literature. Some of the activities involved many people, but there was little emphasis on the interaction of the members taking part, according to Zuk.⁶ At work, nearly all the methods were individual, although assistance was readily given,⁷ and the normal pattern of individuality may have carried over into the play activities.

While the men may have chatted until late after hunting, the women characteristically gossiped in the dance house or at their neighbor's home during their free time.⁸

Strength was an important measure of superiority.⁹ Men commonly engaged in strength testing activities to determine one's superiority, but in other activities such as racing, serious competition was foreign. The young often raced against the old, and a man with two dogs would happily race against a man who had ten dogs.¹⁰

⁶Ibid.

⁷Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Part 1, Vol. V of the Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-24, Copenhagen, 1929, p. 235.

⁸Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimo, Vol. XII of the Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-18, Ottawa, 1923, p. 115.

⁹Zuk, loc. cit.

¹⁰Richard Harrington, The Face of the Arctic (New York: Henry Schuman, 1952), p. 319.

Lyon made the following comment about Eskimo physical strength.

Their bodily strength is not so great as might be expected in people who, from their infancy, are brought up in hardy living and labour. Of this I had sufficient proof, by matching our people with Eskimaux of equal sizes to lift weights, and it invariably happened that burthens, which were raised with facility by our people, could scarcely be lifted by the natives. They are active wrestlers amongst themselves, but can neither run nor jump.¹¹

Urquhart, a medical officer, more recently described the Eskimo of the Western Arctic as fatter than the average European, but very active and possessed of great endurance. The women, a little smaller than the men, were equally strong, worked hard in their homes, and many could hunt and trap as efficiently as the men.¹²

Most writers described the Eskimos as very fond of gambling. According to Tanner, the Labrador Eskimos would sometimes play every night in their huts and both sexes loved games of chance to such a degree that they would even risk their own lives to remain in the game.¹³ Turner observed that the women appeared to have a

¹¹G. F. Lyon, The Private Journal of Captain G. F. Lyon (London: John Murray, 1824), p. 308.

¹²J. A. Urquhart, "Present Day Eskimos of the Canadian Western Arctic", in Bethune, Canada's Western Northland (Ottawa: The King's Printer, 1934), p. 60.

¹³Vaino Tanner, Outlines of the Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador (Vol. 8, No. 1 of Acta Geographica, Helsinki, 1944), p. 551.

greater passion for gambling than the men, in the Ungava District.

They will wager the last article of clothing on their persons till the loser appears in a nude condition before spectators. Then the winner will usually return at least a part of the clothing with an injunction to play more and lose less.¹⁴

Many activities had no end. Roulette, for example, often stopped when the players were hungry and adjourned to eat.¹⁵

Humor in an Eskimo community was described by Jenness as follows:

Humor is never lacking in an Eskimo community, especially during those days of idleness. As the women were gossiping inside a tent one of the men called out that a shoal had entered the weir. The gathering dispersed on an instant; for although theoretically food was shared in common, the family that gathered the largest store always fared better than the rest, and enjoyed greater prestige. The women, therefore, rushed for their spears and hurried down to the stream. But as they collected on the brink and eagerly scanned the empty water, loud guffaws from the men behind advised them of the hoax, and crestfallen, even amid their laughter, they slowly retreated to their tents again.

About six o'clock the next morning, while the camp still slept, I rose to light our breakfast fire. A woman appeared at the door of her tent, and after gazing tranquilly around, picked up her fish-spear and sauntered down to the weir. As I watched her she shouted, and wading into the water, plied her spear frantically to right and left. Instantly the

¹⁴L. M. Turner, On the Indians and Eskimos of the Ungava District, Labrador (Montreal: Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada for the year 1877, Vol. V, 1888), p. 255.

¹⁵William H. Gilder, Schwatka's Search (New York: Abercrombie & Fitch, 1966), p. 45.

camp was in an uproar. First the men dashed out, some naked, some half dressed, and racing headlong to the stream plunged into the water after her; but all the women loitered in the rear. Then shrieks of laughter mingled with loud shouts and angry ejaculations of the men; the weir was empty, and the women had taken their revenge.¹⁶

II. Eskimo Childhood

Eskimo children spent most of their time in play.¹⁷ Few restrictions were placed on them by their parents but they learned in play their duties of adulthood.¹⁸ Birket-Smith found that although they were never punished they were generally well-behaved. Exceptions were most common between two and eight years of age, when they were too young to be ashamed.¹⁹ Mathiassen included such an exception in his description of child rearing:

As a rule, children are allowed their own way, even when quite small; if a little mite wants a sharp knife or ulo to play with, he gets it; I have seen a boy of just over twelve months fall down from the platform to the floor of the snow house, stark naked and with a sharp flensing knife in his hand; it is seldom that they cut themselves,

¹⁶Diamond Jenness, The People of the Twilight (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 238.

¹⁷Arthur Lewis, The Life and Work of the Rev. E. J. Peck Among the Eskimos (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), p. 49.

¹⁸Diamond Jenness, op. cit., p. 162.

¹⁹Kaj Birket-Smith, The Eskimos (London: Methuen, 1959), p. 154.

however, and the Eskimos say that it is good for them to learn early to handle edged things.

The following incident from Southampton Island is typical of child rearing: Agorajaq was a boy of three or four years, and was in the house of his grandfather Angutimarik; he was a determined and ill-natured little chap, knew what he wanted and as a rule had his own way. He came into the house after having been out playing in the snow, and his inner frock was filled with snow, for which reason Angutimarik beat it. This made him furious, he howled and struck at his grandfather, who calmly continued until he had finished. Then the boy's anger turned upon Makik's four year old daughter, to whom he was often cruel; he tried to strike her face, but she pushed him over. He screamed terribly and his grandfather lifted him up; again he rushed at her, was again pushed over and again picked up; this was repeated three times. Finally, Angutimarik took him aside and asked him if he would like a piece of meat. "No!" "Soup?" "No!" Then he went outside. Shortly afterwards his grandmother called to him: "Will you not have a little cooked meat?" "No." "Nor soup?" "No, I won't". Then he came in through the door and struck at his grandfather with his toy whip. "Come now and have some meat and soup while it is warm", said Angutimarik. "No!", and out he went again. A short time afterwards he appeared again in the doorway with the whip. "Do you want some soup now?" asked his grandmother. "No!" "Are you sure you won't have a little soup?" He came closer and was given a big cup of soup. "Would you like some meat too?" He started to eat ravenously.

Once, however, I saw his grandparents thrash him; still, he was more ill-natured than children usually are; most of them are good humoured and it does not spoil them much to get their own way.²⁰

Stefansson noted at one time that several children had been awake from three to five days continuously, playing with visiting children. Young and old people,

²⁰Therkel Mathiassen, Material Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos, Vol. VI No. 1 of the Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-24, Copenhagen, 1928, p. 214.

including himself, frequently stayed awake two or three days.²¹

According to Jenness, the summer was regarded as a holiday time by the children who, when they tired of fishing, could strip and splash in the water, snare sandpipers or shoot at ptarmigan with bows and arrows. The parents placed no restraints upon them and sometimes they would vanish for several hours, returning in the early morning to eat and rest before their next excursion.²²

In their homes, children of the Western Arctic played on the floor, often with very little clothing on, according to Urquhart.²³

The statements in the literature thus emphasize the enthusiasm and the additional freedoms found in Eskimo play, particularly in the times when play occurred, and also in the nature of competition. Environmental factors were also important influences on the nature of the play activities.

²¹Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Hunters of the Great North (London: George G. Harrap & Company, 1923), p. 80.

²²D. Jenness, The People of the Twilight, op. cit., p. 141.

²³J. Urquhart, op. cit., p. 68.



Figure 1. The Eskimo Boy, punting on ice
[Hutton, 1912].



Figure 2. Dolls
[Boas, 1964].

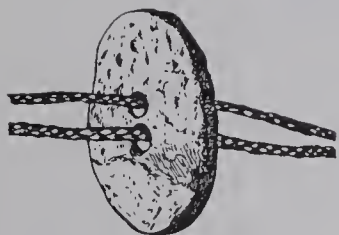


Figure 3.
Buzzes
(1/2 natural size)
[Boas, 1901].

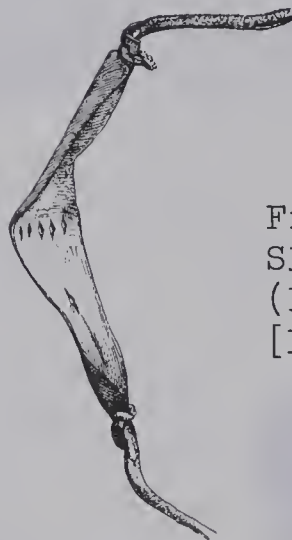


Figure 4.
Sling
(Length, 13 cm.)
[Boas, 1901].

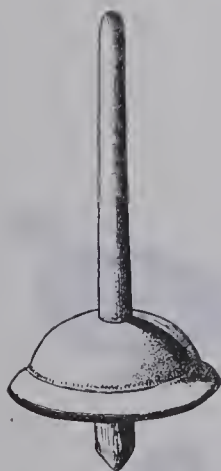


Figure 5.
Wooden Top
(Height, 9 cm.)
[Boas, 1901].



Figure 6.
Rings of Whalebone
(Diameter 8 cm.)
[Boas, 1901].



Figure 7. Eskimo playing ball with a stuffed seal [Nansen, 1911].



Figure 8. Ball
[Boas, 1964].

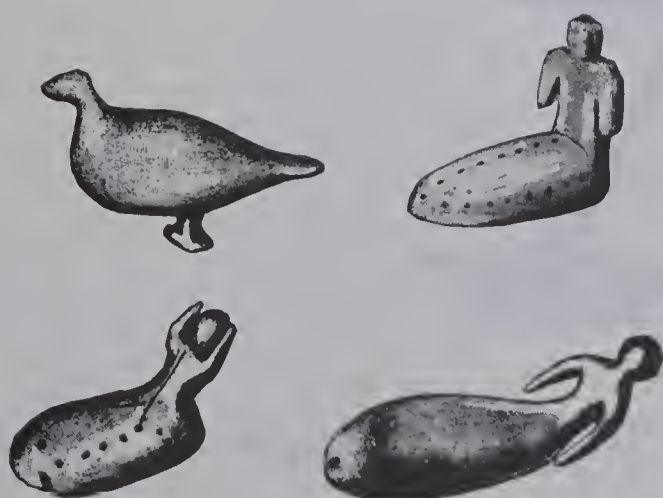


Figure 9. Figures used in playing tingmiujang (dice)
[Boas, 1964].



Figure 10. Eskimo at their games (dualis)
[Hanbury, 1904].



Figure 11. Game of sealing [Boas, 1901].

Figure 12. Ajarorpoq (cat's cradle)
[Boas, 1964].

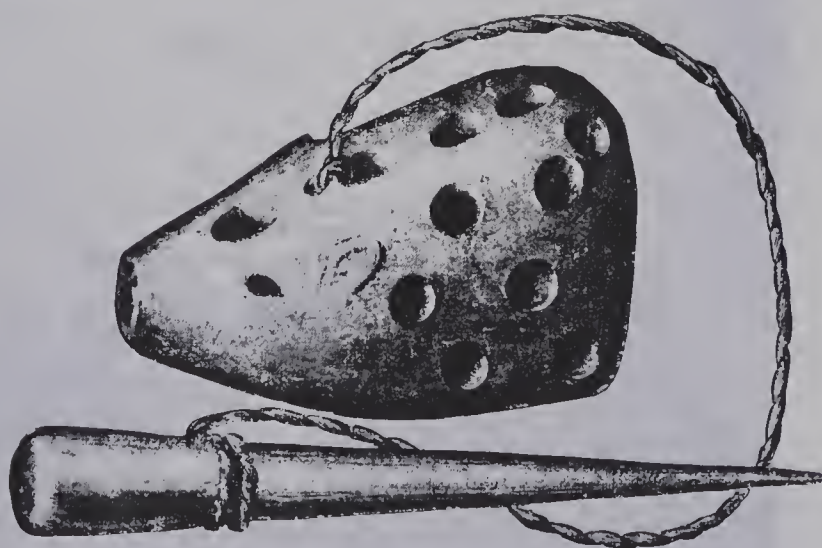
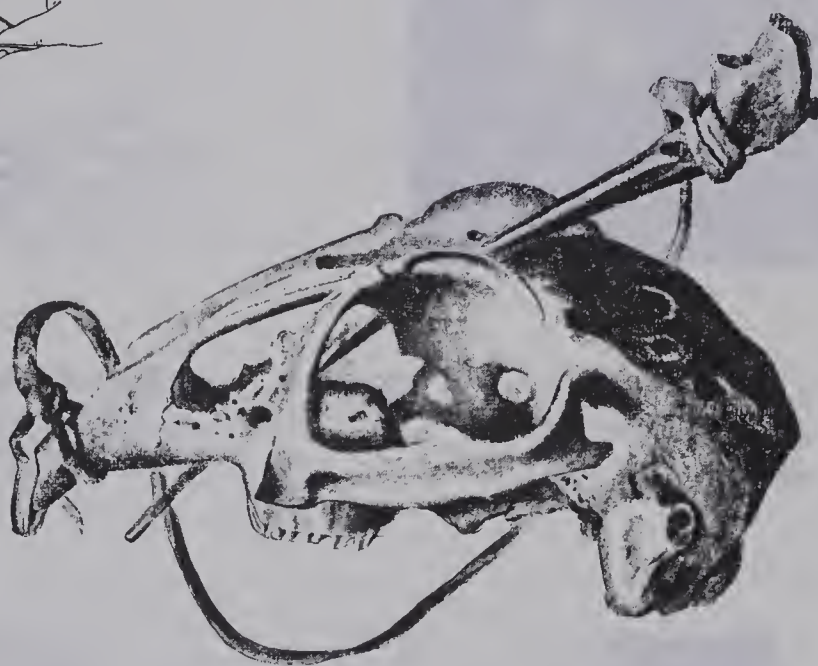
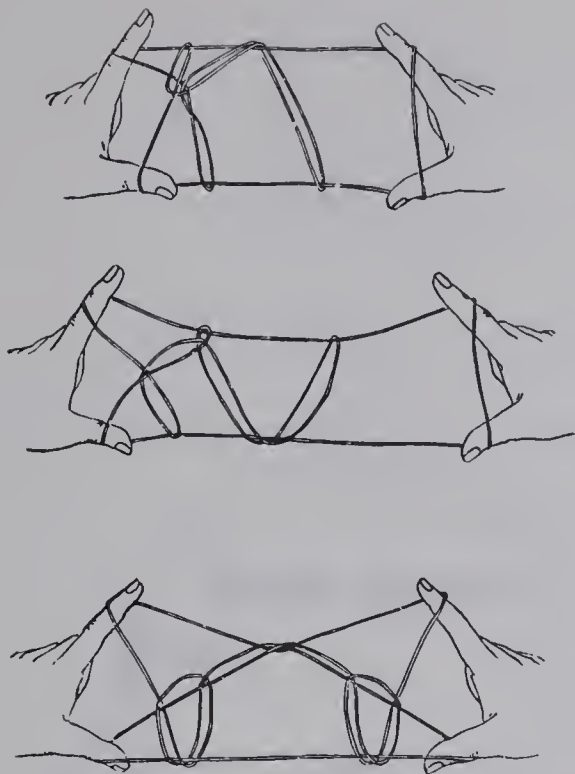


Figure 13. Skull used in the game ajegaung, plus
ivory carving representing the head of
a fox used in the game ajegaung [Boas, 1964].

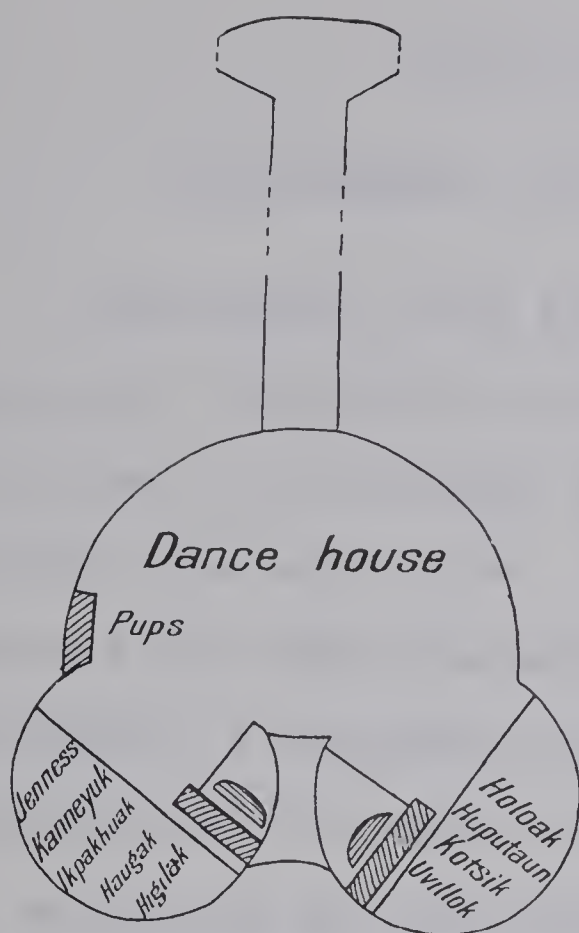


Figure 14. A two-roomed dwelling opening onto a dance-house [Jenness, 1922].



Figure 15. Angivranna, a Coppermine river native, beating a drum [Jenness, 1922].



Figure 16. Aivilik women playing the game nuglutang [Boas, 1907].

EXPERIMENTAL PLAY ACTIVITIES

Experimental play activities were defined as spontaneous individual activities. This definition was established in an attempt to distinguish the most primitive play activities. Nine activities which exhibited the above characteristics are described. The chapter is concluded with a discussion of factors which both help to support and weaken the validity of this definition for describing the most primitive play activities.

I. Descriptions of the Activities

Playing with puppies. Only one reference was found describing Eskimos playing with puppies, in a manner which could be considered experimental. It was stated that a litter or two of the Malamute puppies made excellent playmates for the Eskimo children, as the puppies were gentle and lovable when young.¹

Playing in the snow. Eskimo children were observed playing in the snow as other children played in sand or dirt.² Descriptions of children playing in

¹Revillon Freres, Igloo Life (New York: Privately Printed, 1923), p. 11.

²Ibid., p. 39.

the snow included some comments that refer to activities which were experimental. Jenness described children running about outside or throwing each other in the snow³ and also children rolling in the snow.⁴ The following description seems to refer to an experimental form of sledding.

I have even seen the little rascals sliding down the hills without anything at all in the shape of a sledge, trusting to the wearing qualities of their sealskin clothes; and sometimes I have seen indignant mothers pounce round the corner and drag their bright-eyed urchins off to less destructive play.⁵

Playing in the water. This discussion of Eskimos playing in the water also includes some comments which were made regarding the inability of most Eskimos to swim. These comments were included here to avoid the confusion which would result by including a separate heading for an activity which was not commonly participated in. In a daily record while travelling with the Copper Eskimos, three instances of playing in the water were observed by one investigator.

July 30: The camp was moved to Lake Mumikhoin. As soon as we reached our destination, the children stripped and played about in the water all the

³Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimo (Vol. XII of The Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-18, Ottawa, 1923), p. 115.

⁴Ibid., p. 218.

⁵S. K. Hutton, Among the Eskimos of Labrador (Toronto: The Mussen Book Company, 1912), p. 94.

evening.

August 3: The rain lasted all through the morning, so we spent an idle day in camp. In the evening three of the Eskimos bathed in a creek; they could "dog-paddle" for short distances but had no idea of the art of swimming.

August 10: The weather was very sultry all day and our packs heavy, so when we reached a lagoon of clear sparkling water most of the natives stripped and bathed. This was the only occasion during the whole summer on which the adults bathed, though the children often played in the water.⁶

While the Labrador Eskimos were also unable to swim,⁷ water activities seem to have been popular. One author included, in his description of play activities in the water, some experimental play of the Labrador Eskimo Children.

Whatever game it be, you may be sure that they are playing it thoroughly, even though it be only getting their boots wet. Mothers and fathers only wink at these water-pranks; the boys are growing strong and hardy, and that is a great thing for a hunter; and, after all, their mischief is never malicious.⁸

He then made the following comment regarding their swimming ability.

It is strange to me that these children do not learn to swim; they are on the water every day throughout the summer, and dabbling in it when they are not on it, and yet only a few can swim a stroke. It is the only way in which their childish energy

⁶Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimo (Vol. XII of The Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-18, Ottawa, 1923), pp. 136-7.

⁷S. K. Hutton, op. cit., pp. 96-8.

⁸Vaino Tanner, Outlines of the Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador (Vol. 8, No. 1, of Acta Geographica, Helsinki, 1944), p. 465.

seems wasted, though probably swimming does not strike the Eskimo as a necessary accomplishment. In all their games the children are training hand and eye, and learning things that will be useful some day: and, above all, the Eskimo boy likes to feel himself a hunter.⁹

Stefansson was told by Eskimos that at one time only two men in the MacKenzie district could swim. Several Cape Smythe men who knew how to swim were believed to have learned it on trading expeditions.¹⁰ Wading was done by both sexes, but in separate places after they were about ten years old, as they wore no clothing.¹¹

Running. Jenness seemed to have been referring to spontaneous running of a group of children in the comment that "children, of course, on whom the cares of life weigh little, will play at every season of the year, running races."¹²

Becoming dizzy. An activity, in which several girls were reported to have swung round until they became dizzy, was called ujibzA·rneq.¹³

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Vilhjalmur Stefansson, The Stefansson-Anderson Expedition (Vol. XIV of the Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, New York: Published by order of the Trustees, 1915), p. 285.

¹¹Ibid., p. 318.

¹²Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimo, op. cit., p. 218.

¹³Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos (Vol. V,

Drumming on a tabletop. A young Eskimo girl was probably engaging in experimental play, when according to one author, she frequently drummed on the tabletop with her fingers.¹⁴

Whistling. The Copper Eskimos, although they quickly learned the skill, were unable to whistle, according to one reference, published in 1915.¹⁵ Harper wrote in 1964 about an instance of whistling among the Caribou Eskimos.

On one occasion when Kakoot wandered into the cabin, I invited him to sit on a bench. Presently he began an aimless, tuneless whistling, and kept it up for some time. Then he sang a little-perhaps no words, but just sounds (as we do).¹⁶

Squirting with the mouth. Among the Caribou Eskimos, a young girl amused herself by:

... taking mouthfuls of water and squirting it into a couple of narrow-necked bottles, and scarcely spilling a drop in the process.¹⁷

This activity was probably experimental in nature and while such activities as this and whistling described

Part 1, of The Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-23, Copenhagen, 1929), p. 291.

¹⁴Francis Harper, Caribou Eskimos of the Upper Kazan River, Keewatin (Kansas: The Allen Press, 1964), p. 28.

¹⁵Vilhjalmur Stefansson, The Stefansson-Anderson Expedition (Vol. XIV, op. cit., p. 326.

¹⁶Harper, op. cit., pp. 41-2.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 28.

above may not have been indigenous, similiar activities could have taken place in earlier times. The descriptions were included in this study for their value as examples, since few descriptions of experimental play were available.

Placing sinew through the nostrils. Parry recorded that on one occasion he observed little girls threading sinew through their nostrils.

The little girls were very expert in a singular but dirty amusement, which consisted in drawing a piece of sinew up their nostrils, and producing the end out of their mouths.¹⁸

II. Discussion

One factor, the small number of available references to experimental play activities, limited the variety and validity of statements which could be made regarding this type of play. A few reasons for this lack of information can be suggested. First, it is possible that such simple and apparently useless activities did not attract the interest of the authors. In one case the author apologized for taking the reader's time by including information about any play activities.¹⁹

¹⁸Sir. W. E. Parry, Three Voyages for the Discovery of a North-West Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and Narrative of an Attempt to Reach the North Pole (London: John Murray, 1835), p. 329.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 331.

A second possibility is that they were probably not repeated exactly, and they were therefore difficult to record. A third possibility, from which some meaningful implications can be drawn, is that these play activities were what the authors expected them to be and therefore they were not unusual enough to warrant recording. Such comments as "Eskimo children play in the snow as other children play in sand or dirt"²⁰ suggest that this is true.

Participation by adults in experimental play activities was not mentioned. It was difficult to determine whether the authors would have considered adult participation in such play activities as unusual.

The activities described were carried out individually, although groups of children were often involved. The group probably had some effect on the play spirit and an exchange of ideas between the individuals who were playing, seemed to have occurred. It did not seem necessary, however, for a group to be present for the activity to take place, and when there was a group, the activities were still carried out individually.

²⁰Revillon Freres, op. cit., p. 39.

CHAPTER IV

SYMBOLIC PLAY ACTIVITIES

Symbolic play activities were activities which included symbolically reconstructed elements of former experiences. This definition was established in an attempt to describe activities which were initially engaged in, later than experimental play activities. Engaging in the symbolic reconstruction of former experiences implied that the activities would be more clearly limited than experimental activities but at the same time the play activities could be more meaningful because of the relationships between the play activity and the non-play experience being reconstructed. Thus, along with a less adaptable nature, the play spirit would be characterized by a deeper meaning.

This chapter consists of alphabetically arranged descriptions of activities which satisfied the above requirements, for classification as symbolic activities. A large portion of the material describes equipment which was probably used in symbolic play activities. Although detailed descriptions of equipment have less value to the main problem of this study, the extra detail completes a collection of information which may be useful to those performing other studies. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the material.

I. Descriptions of the Activities

Animal images. Hall stated that when children were old enough they would find their amusement playing with toys made in the forms of various animals.¹ These animals were made from bone or ivory. Dogs were among the principal toys of children, according to Hanbury.²

Birket-Smith observed that the bones in the head of the trout were also used as a kind of toy, and according to their shape they were given various names such as "bear paw", or "owl".³

Blubber pounder. A toy blubber pounder from Repulse Bay, which Mathiassen described, was 6.3 centimeters long and made of musk ox horn.⁴

Boating. Hutton described the boating of Labrador Eskimo boys as follows:

After the ice has broken and gone, the Eskimo boy becomes a sailor. He borrows a boat, and hoists the sail, and fares forth before the wind for the

¹Charles Francis Hall, Arctic Researches and Life Among the Esquimaux (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1865), p. 568.

²David T. Hanbury, Sport and Travel in the Northland of Canada (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1904), p. 67.

³Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos (Vol. V, Pt. 1 of The Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-24, Copenhagen, 1929), p. 291.

⁴Therkel Mathiassen, Material Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos (Vol. VI, Pt. 1 of The Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-24, Copenhagen, 1928), p. 217.

sheer joy of beating back against it. It sometimes seemed a reckless game, for I have seen little fellows of six and seven, with a calico dicky hoisted on an oar to catch the wind, tacking to and fro against a breeze that made the little boat heel over on its side; but they are knowing fellows, and very rarely come to grief in spite of their daring.....

If the wind drops, the boys use the oars, and use them strongly, too: it seems hardly believable, but mere babies have the knack of rowing. Little Abraha, next door to us, was often on the water by himself before he was three, standing up because his legs were too short for him to get a grip if he sat, and tugging away at the pair of little oars.⁵

Bows and arrows. The Labrador Eskimo parents made bows and arrows for their children.⁶ Another author described the Labrador Eskimo boys playing with bows and arrows which they constructed themselves.

He makes a crossbow out of any bit of wood that he can find--a stave of the family flour barrel answers remarkably well--and goes out to shoot birds. His weapon is not a formidable one, and he does very little destruction; but, sometimes, when the tame little snow buntings are fluttering about gathering for their flitting in late autumn or just arriving in the early spring, the little crossbow answers well to the steady little hand and keen eye, and, though it seems cruel to think of it, the Eskimos have little birds for dinner. Boys of thirteen or fourteen go up the valleys with real guns, hunting hares and ptarmigan; but this is serious work for powder and shot are too precious to be wasted on mere play.⁷

In 1835, Parry recorded that he had found toy bows and arrows, on the mainland between Nottingham Island and

⁵S. K. Hutton, Among the Eskimos of Labrador (Toronto: The Mussen Book Company, 1912), pp. 97-98.

⁶Arthur Lewis, The Life and Work of the Rev. E. J. Peck Among the Eskimos (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), p. 50.

⁷S. K. Hutton, op. cit., p. 98.

the North Shore, and also on the west of Baffin Bay. Those found at the former site were of a very large scale,⁸ while the one from Baffin Bay was a five or six inch long bow of whalebone with an arrow of fir. The arrow had a feather at one end and a blunt point of bone at the other.⁹

The Iglulik Eskimo children also played with bows and arrows. These and other hunting implements such as harpoons, leisters and slings were given to them.¹⁰ One toy bow was fifty-three centimeters long and two centimeters wide. It was made of two pieces of antler nailed together with iron nails. A twine was fastened from a knob at one end to a hole at the other end. Four accompanying arrows, of 24 to 32 centimeters long, were described as follows.

The arrows have wooden shafts with nocks (one is strengthened here with sinew-thread binding) and iron heads, three of them blunt, the fourth hammered out to an only slightly sharp blade, inserted in the fore end of the shaft which is lapped with sinew thread.¹¹

On Victoria Island, Jenness recorded that children spent part of a summer day digging shallow pits (tallut)

⁸Sir W. E. Parry, Three Voyages for the Discovery of a North-West Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and Narrative of an Attempt to Reach the North Pole (London: John Murray, 1835), p. 60.

⁹Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁰Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 218.

¹¹Ibid., p. 216.

from which they launched their shafts at imaginary deer.¹² He also noted that both boys and girls learned to stalk game by accompanying their elders on hunting excursions. Their fathers made bows and arrows, suited to their strength, for them.¹³

Canoes. Parry recorded that Eskimo children were given canoes as well as other toys which represented equipment used by the adults.¹⁴

Caribou drive. Jenness described the children in Victoria Island playing as if on a caribou hunt. They set up rows of stones and turf (inyukhuit) for a caribou drive.¹⁵

Cooking pot. Several square soapstone cooking pots from Pond Inlet, which were described by Mathiassen, ranged from 5.7 to 1.9 centimeters long. In the corners were holes for suspension cords.¹⁶

Cup. One cup described by Mathiassen was wide at the top like an European tea cup, and probably was made to imitate one, but another from Pond Inlet was more

¹²Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimo (Vol. XII of the Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-18, Ottawa, 1923), p. 219.

¹³Ibid., p. 170.

¹⁴Sir W. E. Parry, op. cit., Vols. III and IV, p. 47.

¹⁵Diamond Jenness, op. cit., p. 219.

¹⁶Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 217.

cylindrical, measuring 4.1 centimeters high and 3.9 centimeters wide at the top.¹⁷

Dippers. Two dippers from the Aivilingmiut on Southampton Island were 6.1 and 9.2 centimeters long.¹⁸

Dogs and traces. Mathiassen recorded that the claws and sinews of a bearded seal were made to represent four dogs with traces.¹⁹

Dolls. Dolls were described as one of the principal toys of girl children.²⁰ According to Birket-Smith, they were found among the Labrador, Baffin Land, Iglulik, Caribou, Netsilik and Copper Eskimos.²¹ An ivory doll with a cross over the back and breast was described by Giddings as typical of the Thule Culture,²² but Turner stated that it was not found among the Iglulik Eskimos.²³ Lewis recorded that doll's garments made of

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 215.

²⁰David T. Hanbury, op. cit., p. 67.

²¹Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos (Vol. V, Pt. 2 of The Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-24, Copenhagen, 1928), p. 292.

²²J. Louis Giddings, Ancient Men of the Arctic (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), p. 75.

²³L. M. Turner, Ethnology of the Ungava District, Hudson Bay Territory (Washington: Bureau of American Ethnology, 1889, XI, p. 258.

wood were given by parents to small children.²⁴ Hutton described the play of the Labrador Eskimo children he observed as follows:

I have seen the children sitting on the floor, planning and chattering, cutting out clother for their dolls after the unchanging pattern, making dickeys and trousers with a due eye to the economy of cloth, and learning, all unconsciously, to cut and make the real clothes. By daytime the doll is an Eskimo baby, poked feet first into its little mother's hood, and marched from side to side of the hut or among the houses in the village: and, if she does not know that she is watched, the little girl will put on all the serious air of motherhood, and sway her body to and fro, hushing and humming to get the fractious baby to sleep. At night the child undresses her doll, and lays it to rest on a scrap of reindeer skin spread on a toy bedstead of boards, and covers it with a gay quilt, and leaves it to sleep while she clambers into her own wooden bed and pulls her own reindeer skin or patchwork counterpane over her. It is the little girl's chief²⁵ game, the serious game of learning to be grown up.

Parry found figures of men and women, which he described as toys, in the Lyon Inlet and Gore Bay area.²⁶ Mathiassen described a doll from pond Inlet which he considered to be the usual traditional type. It was wooden with no face or arms, no clothing, and about eleven centimeters long.²⁷

²⁴Arthur Lewis, op. cit., p. 50.

²⁵S. K. Hutton, op. cit., p. 92.

²⁶Sir W. E. Parry, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 192.

²⁷Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 217.

Others have feet, the lower edge of trouser-legs indicated; some faint signs of hanging breasts, and are thus females; others may be presumed to be males. Size varies from 5 to 17 centimeters. Some of the same type have caribou skin clothes of the usual cut of frock and trousers.

A large doll (Pingerqalik) is of caribou skin, with the hair inside and stuffed well with caribou hair. It has a head, arms, well developed legs, and a hood of light caribou skin with black edge and hanging fringes. The frock has a white border at the bottom and a small flap at the back, and trousers; it seems to represent a boy. The length is 25 centimeters and the breadth 9 centimeters.²⁸

The dolls from the Padlimiut described by Birket-Smith included a man and a woman in their underdress, without faces indicated. They were 47 and 37 centimeters long. A doll from Baker Lake of 29 centimeters long had the hood down and long hairsticks. Some very primitive dolls were made of bone.²⁹

Girls among the Copper Eskimos made dolls from scraps of skin and clothed them like real men and women. According to Jenness, the mothers encouraged them to learn the useful practice of cutting out patterns.³⁰ In another reference he noted that the dolls were entirely of skin, and he could not remember any wooden faces. They were six to twelve inches long and clothed as females

²⁸Ibid., pp. 217-8.

²⁹Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos (Vol. V, Pt. 1, of the Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-24, Copenhagen, 1928), p. 289.

³⁰Diamond Jenness, op. cit., p. 219.

"which was perhaps only natural, as the woman's costume required rather more skill in tailoring than the men's".³¹

Drum. Mathiassen described a toy drum and drum-stick as follows:

A drum, without skin (Itibdjering) is a bent flat piece of wood, 19 centimeters in diameter, and 1.5 centimeters long, and has a notch in one edge near the fore end, in which the frame lies. A drum-stick found at Kad, Southampton Island, is of wood, 20 centimeters long, and round. Ten centimeters of the length are occupied by the rather thin handle, which ends in a knob. The other part is thicker and lapped with a strip of seal thong.³²

Lyon also observed a toy drum which was played by a four year old boy. The drum was made of whalebone with a thin skin or bladder stretched over it. It was played on by being beaten on the lower edge and not on the skin, and it sounded like a bad tambourine. He saw only one other such instrument and it was also a child's toy.³³

Harpoon. The toy harpoons, which were given to the Iglulik Eskimo boys, were described by Mathiassen.

...a toy harpoon, consisting of a wooden shaft, to the fore end of which is scarfed a foreshaft of ivory; this foreshaft has a transversal groove and, on each side of this, four dark patches to represent the lashing of the joint. A thong runs from an eye on

³¹Diamond Jenness, Material Culture of the Copper Eskimos (Vol. XVI of The Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-18, Ottawa: King's Printer, 1946), p. 144.

³²Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 217.

³³G. F. Lyon, The Private Journal of Captain G. F. Lyon (London: John Murray, 1824), p. 144.

the rear of the foreshaft in under the lashing of the tikagut. Under this thong runs a strap on the line, which is of antler with an iron blade, slightly flat with two bifurcated spurs. The total length is 59 centimeters.

Whereas this harpoon is apparently intended to represent a walrus harpoon, a loose foreshaft (from Iglulik) belongs to a toy kayak harpoon; it is of ivory, has a wide tendon at the butt end, a curved slender point and two pierced holes at right-angles to each other, 9.0 centimeters long.

Two harpoon heads of ivory, both from the Iglulik, illustrate the two now common types: the seal harpoon head, flat with two barbs, two dorsal spurs, and the walrus harpoon head, thin with the blade at right angles to the line holes, with no barbs; 3.5 and 2.8 centimeters long respectively.³⁴

Kroeber stated that the Eskimo boys of Smith Sound also had toy harpoons³⁵ and the following quotation provides an example of the play activities of Labrador Eskimo children with harpoons:

A boy came to our door one day, and asked for an empty meat-tin. A few minutes later I saw a lot of them with harpoons, enjoying an imaginary seal hunt with the meat-tin for quarry. They had flung it into a big pool left by the tide, and were taking turns at spearing it. They flung their heavy harpoons, and splashed through the water to fetch them, amid a chorus of triumph or derision according to their skill. Some of them were able to "kill" the tin every time, but the smaller ones found the harpoon too heavy; the inborn skill was there, for one little fellow had a toy spear of his own, and was flinging it like a thorough artist.³⁶

³⁴Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., pp. 215-16.

³⁵A. L. Kroeber, The Eskimo of Smith Sound (Vol. XII of the Bull. of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, 1899), p. 300.

³⁶S. K. Hutton, op. cit., p. 98.

Head lifting. During the shaman seances on Southampton Island, Mathiassen recorded that the children played "head lifting" in imitation of the adult ceremony.³⁷

House. Parry noted that children built little snow houses in 1835³⁸ and, in writing of E. J. Peck's work among the Labrador Eskimos, Lewis recorded similiar activities.

Both boys and girls play at building snow houses. In summer with only pebbles to work with they simply lay out the ground plans, but in winter they borrow their parent's snow-knives and make complete houses on a miniature scale.³⁹

Hutton described some other aspects of this type of play.

One of the most fascinating relaxations of our long winter was to watch the boys at play. Every day we could hear their shouts as they romped and tumbled in the snow. They rolled huge snowballs, and hollowed them out and hid in them; they built proper little beehive snow huts, and joined them by tunnels under the snow...⁴⁰

Jenness recorded an instance of children representing a dance-house. They marked out a line of snow-huts with pebbles and then filled the dance house with imaginary singers.⁴¹

³⁷Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 215.

³⁸Sir W. E. Parry, op. cit., Vols. III and IV, p. 47.

³⁹Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimo, op. cit., p. 115.

⁴⁰S. K. Hutton, op. cit., p. 93.

⁴¹Diamond Jenness, The People of the Twilight (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 162.

In addition to constructing imaginary houses, the children played in them, and the Copper Eskimo children played house as follows:

One of their favourite pastimes is to carry out, in miniature, some of the duties they will have to perform when they grow up. Thus little girls often have lamps in the corners of their huts over which they will cook some meat to share with their playmates. In summer they love to sleep out-of-doors together, or to set up house in an empty tent. So the days pass happily enough until they reach manhood and womanhood and take up the responsibilities of life in real earnest.⁴²

In an old summer camp in Labrador, a playhouse remained which was described by Hawkes:

Little Eskimo girls "keep house" ... in little snow iglus in winter or in old tent circles in summer, much as their civilized sisters would do. I saw in an old summer camp in Hudson Bay such a playhouse with its little fire-place and lamp of brightly coloured pebbles and bed of moss, mute witness to the active little minds and hands of bygone Eskimo children.⁴³

Kayak. An ivory toy kayak with a man in it from the Aivilingmiut on Southampton Island was described by Mathiassen.

The kayak is rather broad with the ends slightly turned up; it has four deck-straps. The man has a face and arms to the front; the dress is not indicated.⁴⁴
This kayak was 17.5 centimeters long.

⁴²Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimo, op. cit., p. 170.

⁴³E. W. Hawkes, The Labrador Eskimo (Memoir 91, Department of Mines Geological Survey, Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1916), p. 122.

⁴⁴Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 216.

Birket-Smith recorded that "on Sentry Island, high up, there were a number of stone settings which represented kayaks".⁴⁵

Kayaking. Hutton described the kayaking of Labrador Eskimo boys as follows:

I watched one bold spirit among the boys who had found a long and narrow piece of ice that struck him as a suitable kayak. He tried hard to stand on it, but it was too wobbly, and time after time he only just escaped a ducking by great agility; at last he squatted on it tailorwise, balancing himself with his long two-handed "pautik" (paddle), and steered to and fro among the floating ice with all the skill and grace of the practised kayak man.⁴⁶

Lamps. Lamps were described as toys for girls⁴⁷ and also as one of the principal toys of children.⁴⁸ Parry reported that after building a house of snow, little girls would beg a lighted wick from their mother's lamp to illuminate the little dwelling.⁴⁹ Mathiassen described one lamp from Ponds Inlet which was made from soapstone and was 13.8 centimeters long. Others ranged from 17.2 to 4.1 centimeters long, and some had a

⁴⁵Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, op. cit., p. 289.

⁴⁶S. K. Hutton, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

⁴⁷Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 215.

⁴⁸David T. Hanbury, op. cit., p. 67.

⁴⁹Sir W. E. Parry, Vols. III and IV, op. cit., p. 47.

longitudinal partition which shut off a small space. He had seen some like the largest of these used as ante-room lamps.⁵⁰

Ornamentation. Some toys which represented the ornamentation worn by adult women were described by Birket-Smith:

From the Padlimiut at Hikoligjuaq there is a browband of brass with bead-strings and hair-sticks wound with red and black cloth, which are only toys.⁵¹

Paddles. From the mainland, between Nottingham Island and the North Shore, large scale toy paddles were included among the toys reported by Parry.⁵² In the Lyon Inlet and Gore Bay area, toy canoes and paddles were found.⁵³

Sealing game. Jenness described the imitation of killing and cutting up seal as one of the children's games in which the adults sometimes joined. A child lay flat on the ground while the others gathered around him and pulled him about as though they were hewing him to pieces.⁵⁴

⁵⁰Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 216.

⁵¹Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, op. cit., p. 289.

⁵²Sir W. E. Parry, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 60.

⁵³Ibid., p. 192.

⁵⁴Diamond Jenness, The People of the Twilight, op. cit., p. 219.

Sledding with dogs. Children who attached pups or themselves to miniature sleds outdoors were observed by Low, during the daylight.⁵⁵ Hutton described the Labrador Eskimo children playing with the harness on themselves:

For sheer merriment there is nothing to beat the sledge-game without dogs, when six or seven of the boys slip the harness on their own shoulders and race away with the sledge, wheeling this way and that at the command of their driver. They enter most heartily into the fun, crossing from one place to another in the team, just as dogs do, snapping and yelping and whining and tugging to be on the move every time the driver calls a halt.⁵⁶

Puppies were often harnessed to a toy sled, which was described by Revillon Freres as the first toy of a little Eskimo.⁵⁷

For nine months there is good sledding. ...The first game naturally is harnessing the toddling puppies to a sled for a "mush" or journey over the ice around the igloo. Thus the child and dogs begin their lifelong companionship and dependence upon each other.⁵⁸

Hutton described sledding activities with puppies among the Labrador Eskimos.

But whips are only accessories to the great game of sledge-driving, and an Eskimo boy's most constant plaything is--the dog. The men always hand the puppy

⁵⁵A. P. Low, op. cit., p. 175.

⁵⁶S. K. Hutton, op. cit., p. 96.

⁵⁷Revillon Freres, Igloo Life, (New York: Privately Printed, 1923), p. 38.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 39.

dogs over to the boys; it is a training for both boy and dog, for the boy uses all the tricks and mannerisms that he has seen his father use in driving the big sledge, and the unwilling puppy is compelled to make a trial of harness.

If there is a little sledge to be had, so much the better; the boy can sit upon it and enjoy all the delights of real travelling; if he has no sledge, he harnesses the pup to a block of ice, which does very well for a makeshift. These boys are wonderfully keen teachers; they have all the thoroughness of the trained Eskimo hunter; and only one who has tried to drive a team of Eskimo dogs can know what a stock of patience and perseverance the child must have to teach the puppy to keep his trace tight and to know and obey the words of command. Most of the boys are wise enough to train one puppy at a time; but I once saw a big hulking lad trying to teach a team of three, and naturally enough the three were hardly ever all on their legs at the same time. While one lay down to whine and whistle the others would wander off in opposite directions to the extent of their traces, and, finding themselves fast, they too would lie down and whistle just as the boy had persuaded the other to move on. The experiment was not a success, for after a time the lad got angry, and there seemed to be more temper than teaching in the thrashing he gave those poor pups. Of course every boy's ambition is to drive full-grown dogs, but when that day comes his playtime is over, for he must⁵⁹ be off with the sledge to fetch firewood or seals.

Peck wrote that any dogs not used by the hunters were driven in "various directions over the hard packed snow",⁶⁰ suggesting that the adult dogs were also played with at times.

Mathiassen stated that the boys were given miniature whips and sledges to which a pup was often

⁵⁹S. K. Hutton, op. cit., pp. 94-96

⁶⁰E. J. Peck, The Eskimo, Our Brethren of the Arctic (The M.S.C.C., 1922), p. 8.

harnessed and its treatment was "by no means gentle".⁶¹ He described a toy Iglulik sledge which had 16.5 by 2.5 centimeter wooden runners upturned at the nose, six cross-slats about 8 centimeters long, and double lashings of sinew thread.

The draught line, of sealskin, is fastened on by knots in holes in the runners and ends in a loop and a bone toggle; it extends ten centimeters beyond the nose of the runners. There are four trace buckles with traces and harness, 50 to 74 centimeters long. A small toy sledge from Pond Inlet is of wood, 6.0 by 1.8 centimeters, the nose is slightly upturned and the cross-slats are not indicated,⁶² but the runners are cut out on the under side.

A small sled of undefined size, described by Parry, was made of whalebone.⁶³ He also mentioned that toy sleds were found in the Lyon Inlet and Gore Bay area.⁶⁴ At River Clyde he observed that bargains were made with the children, showing that they had some right of property over their dogs.⁶⁵ Such children may have been beyond the age of playing with puppies, for Bethune wrote that in Canada's western northland, the children had their own dogs, after the preliminary stage of having puppies.

⁶¹Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 215.

⁶²Ibid., p. 216.

⁶³Sir W. E. Parry, Vols. III and IV, op. cit., p. 47.

⁶⁴Sir W. E. Parry, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 192.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 24.

When a boy was nine or ten years old he had a little team of two and later three of his own dogs. He followed his father and had his own traps.⁶⁶ Tanner suggested that the fathers supervised the boys in the Labrador Eskimo area.⁶⁷

Snow carving. Jenness observed that, in mid-winter, children would carve out a block of snow in a shape possibly of a rabbit and the rest of the children would decapitate it.⁶⁸

They trace too figures of men and animals in the snow, and carve them out of single blocks; for example, two small boys one day set up a snow-rabbit on top of a hill; one ran and stabbed it through the heart with his knife, while the other completed its demolition by slicing off its head. Sometimes they make toy sleds of ice; like real ones⁶⁹ that are used by their parents in emergencies.

He also noted that the children frequently outlined clothing in the hard snow, with knives, as well as the figures of human being.⁷⁰

⁶⁶W. C. Bethune, Canada's Western Northland, It's Resources, Population, and Administration (Ottawa: The King's Printer, 1937), p. 68.

⁶⁷Vaino Tanner, Outlines of the Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador (Vol. VIII No. 1 of Acta Geographica, Helsinki, 1944), p. 497.

⁶⁸Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimo, op. cit., p. 115.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 219.

⁷⁰D. Jenness, Material Culture of the Copper Eskimos, op. cit., p. 146.

Spears. Parry reported that from the mainland between Nottingham Island and the North Shore, toys included spears of a very large scale.⁷¹ A salmon spear from the Aivilingmiut had a thin wooden shaft, a center prong of iron, side prongs eleven centimeters long of musk-ox horn, barbs of iron and lashings of sinew thread. The length measured 61 centimeters.⁷²

Ulo. A toy ulo from Chesterfield Inlet had a red slate blade and an ivory handle and tang. Two pins of ivory held the blade on, and the blade was 3.5 centimeters long and 3.3 centimeters wide.⁷³

Water scraper. A toy water-scraper from the Iglulik Eskimos was made of a caribou scapula and measured 6.8 centimeters in length.⁷⁴

Whip. Hutton commented that:

Sometimes a man's first present to his son is a toy whip, with a lash five or six feet long, and children hardly out of their babyhood crawl about the floor shouting at imaginary dogs and dealing vicious smacks at them.⁷⁵

⁷¹Sir. W. E. Parry, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 60.

⁷²Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 216.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 217.

⁷⁵S. K. Hutton, op. cit., p. 94.

II. Discussion

A large number of the descriptions in this chapter refer only to the equipment used and do not elaborate on the activity which was carried out. These descriptions of the equipment, however, indicate that children spent a great deal of time imitating the activities carried on around them and particularly the activities of the adults.

The suitability of labelling this group of symbolic activities, as an early form of play, is difficult to assess. As is the case with experimental activities, such a definition does not confine the activities included to a past period in time, for children of today engage in symbolic play activities. It is possible that further limitations may be applied to the definitions to make them suitable for describing an early form of play. It is possible, for example, that different groups of participants took part in the symbolic play of earlier periods than in the present forms of symbolic play. In the sealing game, adult participation was recorded. The participation in activities closely related to play such as drama and art may also yield evidence to support the importance of symbolic play to adults of early cultures. Dramatic activities were not clearly separated from play and other activities in the Eskimo culture and toys which were hand made, were made with varying degrees of accuracy.

CHAPTER V

PREDETERMINED PLAY

Predetermined play activities were activities which were goal oriented. The desired end result of each activity was established beforehand and the activity was then carried out with the intention of achieving the predetermined end result.

The following descriptions of these activities are arranged in alphabetical order. A few of these descriptions only include information about the equipment used and no information about the activity process is provided. This equipment could not be assumed to be of a symbolic nature because there was no indication that it represented anything from everyday life. It did, however, appear to have been constructed for specific purposes and where similiar equipment was found in other cultures it was employed in predetermined play or more advanced forms according to the schema used in this study. Such descriptions of equipment which were included in this chapter were the ball tied to a cord, bull roarer, buzz, pop-gun, top, and wind wheel.

I. Descriptions of the Activities

Ball tied to a cord. At Eskimo Point a young man and some boys were recorded to have been amusing them-

selves with a ball tied to a cord of about fifty centimeters long. They held the free end of the cord and threw the ball after swinging it.¹ This apparatus may have been similar to the bolas of the Alaskan Eskimos, which was illustrated as five weights on separate cords, joined together in one knot.² Used as a bird sling, the apparatus opened in the air like the spokes of a wheel and wrapped around the wings and necks of flying birds. These weights were typical of the Thule Culture but were foreign to the more recent Iglulik Eskimos.³

Bouncing. Adults play "piqlertartut" with a small ball of the cartilage of a walrus breast bone. This is thrown on to the ground, and the players sitting on the platform try to catch it as it bounces up. The uneven floor makes the direction of the upward flight of the ball very uncertain.⁴ A similar game, "pillirtartuq", described by Zuk, involved an individual

¹Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos (Vol. V, Pt. 1 of The Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-24 (Copenhagen, 1929), p. 274.

²Francis M. Menager, The Kingdom of the Seal (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1962), p. 12-13.

³J. Louis Giddings, Ancient Men of the Arctic (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), p. 75.

⁴Therkel Mathiassen, Material Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos (Vol. VI, No. 1 of The Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-24, Copenhagen, 1928), p. 222.

bouncing and catching a joint bone.⁵

Bull roarer. The bull roarer, "imilguptak", was a child's toy.⁶ One from the Iglulik was wooden, 7.8 centimeters long, 1.8 centimeters wide, flat and slightly curved with deep notches in the edges. At the narrow end was a hole in which was fastened a piece of sinew-thread, 17 centimeters long, ending in a noose.⁷ Birket-Smith also referred to it as a child's toy.⁸ Jenness considered it to be uncommon as he saw only one specimen in two years. This was small and crudely made with a deep notch in the base suggesting the bifid tail of a fish. It was about 10.5 centimeters long, 2.5 centimeters wide, and the cord was about 13 centimeters long.⁹

A bull-roarer described by Kroeber was approximately

⁵William M. Zuk, Eskimo Games (Ottawa: Curriculum Section, Education Division, Northern Administration Branch, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1967), p. 10.

⁶Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimo (Vol. XII of The Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-18, Ottawa, 1923), p. 220.

⁷Therkel Mathiassen, Material Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos, op. cit., p. 218.

⁸Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, op. cit., p. 274.

⁹Diamond Jenness, The Material Culture of the Copper Eskimo (Vol. XVI of The Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-18, Ottawa: King's Printer, 1946), p. 142-42.

12.6 by 3 centimeters¹⁰ and of a figure eight shape. It was called "hieqtaq", and was made of a flat bone with a looped string passing through the middle.¹¹

This activity was recorded among the Labrador, Iglulik, Caribou, Netsilik and Copper Eskimos.¹² From the west, there were records of its occurrence only at Point Barrow, Alaska and the Bering Strait. Birket-Smith therefore suggested that it was probably an old and common Eskimo element which had perhaps already fallen into disuse in some places.¹³

Buzz. The buzz or "nilitak"¹⁴, a common toy of children,¹⁵ was described as it existed among the Caribou Eskimos:

A specimen from the Padlimiut, Hikoligjuaq, consists of a circular disc of unhaired caribou skin with a diameter of six centimeters and two small holes in the middle. ...A sinew-cord runs through both holes and forms a small loop, whilst the two free ends are furnished with two small

¹⁰A. L. Kroeber, *The Eskimo of Smith Sound* (Vol. XII of *The Bull. of the American Museum of Natural History*, New York, 1899), p. 300.

¹¹Ibid., p. 296.

¹²Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, op. cit., p. 292.

¹³Ibid., p. 120.

¹⁴Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimo, op. cit., p. 220.

¹⁵Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, op. cit., p. 120.

strips of hairy sealskin. The total length of the cord is sixty centimeters. By holding the cord at both ends and first swinging the disc a few times round so that the cord becomes twisted, the disc can be made to rotate rapidly with a buzzing sound by alternately bringing the hands closer together and further away from each other.¹⁶

Low described one with an ivory button,¹⁷ and Mathiassen described another of a small vertebra of a white fish with the two longitudinal canals used to pass the sinew threads through.¹⁸ The buzz was known among the Baffin Land, Iglulik, Southampton Island, Caribou, Netsilik, and Copper Eskimos.¹⁹ It was known to Jenness among the Copper Eskimos, only by description, for he never saw it in their possession.²⁰ It was known from the earlier Thule Culture.²¹

Fishing. Jenness described a game called fishing which he observed among the Copper Eskimos.

Both children and adults play a game called fishing; (ekaluktok). A number of small bones from the flippers of a seal are placed in the toe of a shoe and a noose of sinew set vertically in the heel. The opening is then closed with the left hand and the

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 289-90.

¹⁷A. P. Low, Cruise of the Neptune (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1906), p. 176.

¹⁸Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 218.

¹⁹Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos (Vol. V, Pt. 2, op. cit., p. 292.

²⁰Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimo, op. cit., p. 220.

²¹Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V., Pt. 2, op. cit., p. 120.

bones are shaken down to the heel, when the noose is drawn tight and taken out. An expert player will always snare²² one bone in the noose, and usually several.

Gymnastic exercises.

Atdlungatoq consists in a thong being stretched across the snow house, fastened with toggles to the outer side of the house, or²³ it may be stretched between two stone pillars.

On such a thong, according to Mathiassen, the adults did physical exercises, including sitting on the thong and bringing the legs over without losing balance.²⁴ Birket-Smith recorded three kinds of athletics which were practiced on the thong:

From the roof of the snow house two thongs hang down, each with a loop at the bottom; in these the athlete sits and turns over (itaujAqtoq). In the open air a thong is stretched; from the thong hang two loops, through which the hands are inserted; seizing the thong with an overhand grip; one swings forward at arm's length and round about the thong. This is called akLunerArneq. Some tie a knife to the thong in order to show their skill. An exercise which is called nimrataA'rneq is a forward turning round the thong, which is held²⁵ with a right over-grip and a left under-grip.

Jenness, among the Copper Eskimos, recorded the execution of gymnastic exercises on a stout line of

²²Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimo, op. cit., p. 220.

²³Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 221.

²⁴Ibid., p. 221.

²⁵Kaj Birket-Smith, op. cit., p. 272.

bearded seal-skin passed through two holes in the roof of the dance house and clamped with two strong poles.

Hanging by his hands the native circles round till his toes are almost touching the rope, then he swings violently back in a half-circle and comes to an upright position, his body balanced against the rope with the weight resting on the hands. From this position, he swings round again in a half-circle, throws his legs violently out and swings back again. The exercise is continued until the performer becomes tired or fails to maintain his balance. Very few of the natives, however, could accomplish the feat at all. The women never attempted it, though they sometimes joined in a simpler exercise in which two small loops were made in the rope about a foot apart. Hanging by these the performer circled round and placed a foot in each loop, then released his hands and hung at full length downwards with his head almost touching the floor. From this position he had to draw himself up again, grasp the loop with his hands, release his feet and drop to the floor.²⁶

Zuk described what he called "alluniartaq" as a rope strung across inside an igloo, and this was used like a high bar.²⁷

Juggling. Iglukitartut" is the name of an adult juggling game, with two or three stones.²⁸ The stones were held in both hands, thrown into the air in turn, and caught by different hands.²⁹ Birket-Smith stated that juggling with several balls at once was common to

²⁶Diamond Jenness, op. cit., p. 2221

²⁷William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 9.

²⁸Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 222.

²⁹Ibid.

the whole Eskimo region.³⁰ It was found among the Labrador, Baffin Land, Iglulik, Caribou, Netsilik and Mackenzie Eskimos.³¹ Jenness recorded that he had never observed this game among the Copper Eskimos.³²

Zuk illustrated a juggler sitting with the knees bent so that each foot was under the thigh of the opposite leg.³³

According to Stefansson, many Eskimos were expert jugglers, especially the women. They would juggle three stones with one hand, or keep a ball in the air by kicking it several times with the toe of one foot.³⁴ Harper recorded that a child kept three stones in the air with two hands,³⁵ and Kroeber noted that the adult Eskimos of Smith Sound juggled up to five pebbles.³⁶

³⁰ Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, of the Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-24, Copenhagen, 1929, p. 119.

³¹ Ibid., p. 289.

³² Diamond Jenness, op. cit., p. 220.

³³ William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 5.

³⁴ Vilhjalmur Stefansson, The Stefansson-Anderson Expedition, Vol. XIV of the Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, New York: Published by order of the Trustees, 1915, p. 165.

³⁵ Francis Harper, Caribou Eskimos of the Upper Kazan River, Keewatin, (Kansas: The Allen Press, 1964), p. 21.

³⁶ A. L. Kroeber, op. cit., p. 300.

Boas described a game with small balls which was called "igdlukitaqtung", in which the balls were tossed up alternately from the right to the left, one always being in the air.³⁷ Songs were used to accompany the juggling such as the one below.

Qolurpajause qolurperpajause sigivanga pangmane, majoriva pangmane. Aivagouq niaqoa aqsagotidorkulu oqigi-

mine above A walrus its head it rolls(?) when
me it is said they

arkodulu sala, atagoana ijijivatseung tigmeraqdjung audlar-
are light sala, one going, for he is your, a little, he who
for us (?) down partner bird goes

toung qigonun uqalirotlune atinikun pokierpoq, akakaja
away to a heap turning from under it akakaja.
of stones into a me escapes,
rabbit

Translation

You are up in the air, you are up in the air,
thou who thou art above me art coming down. He
who is above me is going up again. It is said
the head of a walrus is turning round. They are
light, sala. Your partner who is going down is
a little bird. He who goes away to the heaps of
stones turns into a rabbit which escapes from
under me. Akakaja.³⁸

Jumping. A jumping game was described by Jenness from among the Caribou Eskimos where it was played during sled migrations.³⁹

³⁷Franz Boas, The Central Eskimo (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), p. 162.

³⁸Franz Boas, The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay (Vol. XV of the American Museum of Natural History Bulletins, New York, 1901), p. 345.

³⁹Diamond Jenness, op. cit., p. 221.

Often a stick would be pushed into the side of a sled so that it projected horizontally about three feet above ground and one after another the men and women would jump and kick it with the toes of their both feet simultaneously. Novices often fall on their backs and provoke much laughter.⁴⁰

Zuk described "misijaq", a two step jump which involved trying to jump the farthest in two strides.⁴¹ Various jumping tricks were described for Stefansson by an Eskimo.

Roxy tells me that when he was a boy they had various jumping tricks, one to kick a stick over their head with both feet, landing on them again, another was to tie a thong around the neck and just above the knee of one foot and drawing the knee close to the chin and kicking with the free foot.⁴²

Kayaking. Kroeber noted that sometimes the Eskimos of Smith Sound went out in their kayaks to show their skill by coming as near as possible to upsetting. They were less skillful than the Greenland Eskimos who could right themselves when upset.⁴³

Picking up an object. The object of the game "kiisinasuttuq", was to pick up an object from a one-handed pushup position. It required turning the body slightly sideways.⁴⁴

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 221.

⁴¹William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 8.

⁴²Vilhjalmur Stefansson, op. cit., p. 166.

⁴³A. L. Kroeber, op. cit., p. 300.

⁴⁴William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 6.

Point and speak. Boas described an amusement of women and children in which they pointed successively at the forehead, cheek and chin, pronouncing as rapidly as possible, in Eskimo, "The forehead, the cheek, the chin, the cheek".⁴⁵

Pole rise. Boas described the following activity.

One of their gymnastic exercises requires considerable knack and strength. A pole is tied with one end to a stone or to a piece of wood that is firmly secured in the snow. A man then lies down on his back, embracing the pole, his feet turned toward the place where the pole is tied to the rock. Then he must rise without bending his body.⁴⁶

Pop-gun. The pop-gun was known to Birket-Smith only from the Caribou Eskimos, other than the West Greenland Eskimos.⁴⁷ It was a small tube such as a bird bone, through which the boys would send a ball of chewed lichen by means of a rod.⁴⁸

Prone jump. "Pangakkartaq" involved moving forward on the hands and feet simultaneously with the body extended in a push-up position.⁴⁹ Boas described a similar activity:

⁴⁵Franz Boas, The Central Eskimos, op. cit., p. 163.

⁴⁶Ibid., Appendix, note 3.

⁴⁷Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 2, p. 120.

⁴⁸Ibid., Pt. 1, p. 290-1.

⁴⁹William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 2.

In another of their gymnastic exercises they lie down on their stomachs, the arms bent so that the hands lie close together on the breast, palms turned downward. Then they have to jump forward without bending their body, using only their toes and hands. Some are said⁵⁰ to be unable to jump several feet in this manner.

Punting on ice. Hutton described the Labrador Eskimo children rafting on ice pans:

Springtime provides the most exciting game of the whole year, when the ice breaks, and the tides that come oozing up the beach bring great pans and little flat pieces floating shorewards.

A floating piece of ice makes a splendid raft, to Eskimo ways of thinking, and I have seen crowds of our Okak boys standing in ones and twos on these very unstable punts, and moving along by paddling with their hands in⁵¹ the water or prodding at the bottom with poles.

Seal racing. Seal racing was described by Zuk as racing done on the hands with the body trailing.⁵²

Sealskin rides. The Eskimo word for slinding down a slope on a caribou skin, as Birket-Smith recorded it among the Caribou Eskimos, was "hitorA·rnEq".⁵³ Bilby also described the tobogganning of Eskimo children as rides on sealskins borrowed from their mothers.⁵⁴ Hutton

⁵⁰Franz Boas, The Central Eskimo, op. cit., Appendix note 3.

⁵¹S. K. Hutton, op. cit., pp. 96-8.

⁵²William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 7.

⁵³Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, p. 291.

⁵⁴Julian W. Bilby, Among Unknown Eskimo (London: Seeley Service & Co., 1912), pp. 93-4.

described the activity as follows:

Sometimes there was a louder din than usual, and this generally meant that four or five were huddled together on a big sealskin for want of a proper sledge, clinging to one another and roaring with the delight of a new sensation. The sealskin seemed to slide easily enough when the hair was right way on, but it twisted and lurched over the lumps in the track and ended by turning wrong way on and spilling its passengers into a snowdrift.⁵⁵

Skiing. Hutton described the sliding shoes which were preferred by the Labrador Eskimo boys.

There was a steep slope beside my window, where the drifting snow had filled the bed of the stream, and this was the great sledging-place. I watched them with a good deal of trepidation as they careered down on little wooden runners strapped to their feet--miniature ski, whittled from a stick of the family firewood--but I never heard of an accident. However fast they were going they seemed able to dodge the lumps in the path, and avoided collisions by twisting round in a sharp curve. If they fell at all, they always seemed to tumble into a snowdrift, and picked themselves up and shook their shaggy heads, and tramped up the hill again shouting with laughter.⁵⁶

Sledding. Riding on sleds was also described by Hutton from among the Caribou Eskimos.

Sometimes they tried the less exciting forms of tobogganning, dragging out little sledges made for one, and built after the Eskimo pattern with the cross-pieces bound with thongs to the runners, and bumped madly down the hill; or a party of boys and girls joined at one of the big travelling sledges, yelling and laughing, and shoving one another off into the snow.⁵⁷

⁵⁵S. K. Hutton, Among the Eskimos of Labrador (Toronto: The Mussen Book Company, 1912), pp. 93-4.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

Sling. Young boys on the Kazan River threw stones by means of a sling which presumably belonged to one of the Eskimo boys. Harper quoted Charles Schweder, who stated that these people used a sling very commonly, endeavoring to strike such targets as gull, but he had never seen them succeed in their efforts.⁵⁸

A sling was illustrated by Boas⁵⁹ as an instrument for a game of throwing stones. It was made of leather and was provided with thongs.⁶⁰

Spear throwing. A spear-throwing contest was described by Bilby during a trading feast on Baffin Land.

The spear-throwing competition calls for a high degree of skill. From the top of a fixed, inclined pole, a line is carried to the earth, having an ivory ring tied in it half way down. This ring is carefully concealed by fringes of hide, and the spear throwers stationed at a recognized distance away have to cast their weapons deftly through it. The attempt demands the greatest accuracy of vision and training of the hand.⁶¹

Squat and extend the legs. This activity involved the alternate forward outstretching of the legs in rapid

⁵⁸Francis Harper, Caribou Eskimos of the Upper Kazan River, Keewatin (Kansas: The Allen Press, 1964), p. 41.

⁵⁹Franz Boas, The Eskimo of Baffinland and Hudson Bay (Vol. XV of the American Museum of Natural History, Bulletins, New York, 1901), p. 53.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 56.

⁶¹Julian W. Bilby, op. cit., p. 241.

progression, from a squat position.⁶²

Squat and hop. This activity was described by Mathiassen as played by half grown girls who would squat down opposite each other and hop in concert, while singing long monotone songs.⁶³

Squat and kneel. Moving from a squat position to the knees and back again in quick movements, a game called pillirtartuq was described by Zuk.⁶⁴ Boas described a similar activity.

In summer children and grown up people exercise by sitting down on their knees in a large circle and simultaneously jumping up and down, by kneeling and holding their toes in their hands and trying to outdo one another in running in this position.⁶⁵

Throwing at a target. A pastime which involved throwing small rocks to demolish the ice caps on top of rocks at the river's edge was described by Harper in late September in a mixed Indian-Eskimo camp.⁶⁶ They bounced rocks off the larger ones and tried throwing across the river, which was fifty or sixty yards wide.⁶⁷ Harper also observed young boys who had paused at the

⁶²William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 2.

⁶³Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 215.

⁶⁴William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 7.

⁶⁵Franz Boas, The Central Eskimo, op. cit., p. 164.

⁶⁶Francis Harper, op. cit., p. 22.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 41.

top of a cliff they had climbed, throwing rocks over the edge.⁶⁸ He commented that "their expert markmanship was obvious; it must have come from long practice, and perhaps also by inheritance!"⁶⁹ Turner noted that some younger men acquired surprising dexterity in throwing stones at a mark, among the Eskimos of the Ungava District.⁷⁰

Top. Mathiassen recorded that Iglulik children had tops.⁷¹ They also were known from among the Baffin Land, Southampton Island, and Netsilik Eskimos.⁷² Although he never observed them, Birket-Smith suggested that they were likely used by the Caribou Eskimo children.⁷³ A wooden top illustrated by Boas⁷⁴ was probably spun on ice.⁷⁵

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 20.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 41.

⁷⁰L. M. Turner, Ethnology of the Ungava District, Hudson Bay Territory (Washington: Bureau of American Ethnology Reports, 1889), XI, p. 255.

⁷¹Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 215.

⁷²Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, op. cit., p. 293.

⁷³Ibid., p. 291.

⁷⁴Franz Boas, The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay (Vol. XV of the American Museum of Natural History Bulletins, New York), 1901, p. 53.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 55.

Walking on the elbows. Walking on the elbows, or "ilusimmiq", with the hands held over the ears and in a prone position with the weight on the toes, was illustrated by Zuk.⁷⁶

Whalebone hoops. Boas described small hoops of whalebone "terkutuk", which were joined crosswise, and then placed on the ice or hard snow when the wind was blowing. The young men ran to catch them.⁷⁷

Whips. Playing with whips was described by Hutton among the Labrador Eskimos as follows:

Out of doors the boys play with full sized whips, and it is marvellous to see how cleverly the little fellows wield the thirty feet of lash. They set an empty tin on a hummock of ice and flick it off time after time from the full length of the whip.⁷⁸

Wind wheel. The wind wheel was known to the Caribou, Iglulik and Netsilik Eskimos. Birket-Smith described a specimen of this children's toy from the Padlimiut Eskimos. It was 30.5 by 6.7 centimeters in size. It was made of "a flat piece of wood pointed at both ends, the edges bevelled off at opposite sides like a very crude propeller".⁷⁹ There was a hole in the center

⁷⁶William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 8.

⁷⁷Franz Boas, The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay, op. cit., p. 111.

⁷⁸Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, op. cit., p. 290.

⁷⁹S. K. Hutton, op. cit., p. 94.

for a handle.

Whistles. Birket-Smith described a whistle from the Padlimiut which consisted of two pieces of wood, tied together with babiche. The upper side was flat and pierced by six holes, while the under side was very arched but formed a flat mouth-piece. At the fore end, there was a hole. The length was 28.2 centimeters and these seemed to have been adopted from the Indians.⁸⁰

From the Quaernermiut, Birket-Smith described a specimen of 19 centimeters long, made of a quill. The distal end was cut off obliquely to form a long thin point, and a sound hole was cut near the proximal end.⁸¹ Among the Caribou Eskimos, these whistles were made for children, and it was recorded that they played on them to while away the time".⁸²

Whistles of goose feathers were also known from MacFarland River in the MacKenzie region.⁸³ Hanbury, who observed "small flutes, like penny whistles", made of wood at Baker Lake, commented that they were indigenous.⁸⁴

⁸⁰Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, op. cit., p. 272.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 291.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, op. cit., p. 120.

⁸⁴David T. Hanbury, Sport and Travel in the Northland of Canada (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1904, p. 67.

Discussion

Some of these goal oriented activities could have been symbolic as well as predetermined. They were included herein because there was more emphasis on being able to perform the skill repeatedly. Some such activities were juggling, fishing and playing with the whip.

Groups of people were commonly present for these activities and it was possible that they influenced the individual participating in the activity but the activities could also have been performed in solitude, whether or not they were.

The participants were often described as adults.

The activities were all physical except for the pointing and speaking, which was also verbal. The gymnastic exercises, jumping and related activities with the body were feats of difficulty which could be performed or not, and no indication was given that finesse was important. The difficulty of the task was sometimes increased, however, as was the case with the gymnastic exercises.

These activities were less related to every-day life than the experimental and symbolic activities and they were probably beginning to serve some independent functions.

CHAPTER VI

COLLECTIVE PLAY

Collective play activities were defined as those activities in which there was required interaction between the players so that they either helped, hindered or depended upon each other in order to carry out the particular activity. This section includes, initially, alphabetically arranged descriptions of the activities which fit this definition, and secondly, a discussion of these activities. In several cases, the literature provided varying reports concerning the procedure or equipment used in the activities. These variations have been discussed together under single headings rather than under many headings, so that the relationships between these slightly varied activities can be more clearly perceived, and also to avoid duplication in presentation.

I. Descriptions of the Activities

Back to back pushing contest. "Tunummijuk" was the name given to a game in which two people sat back to back and tried to push each other over a line which was in front of each opponent's feet. They pushed using the hands and feet.¹

¹William M. Zuk, Eskimo Games (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1967), p. 8.

Ball games. Ball games were the best known and one of the most common forms of Eskimo sport, according to Birket-Smith.² Mathiassen also commented on their popularity.

Ball games are very popular in summer: both men and women, often with children in the back-pouches take part and often roll over in a bunch on the grass.³

Mathiassen described ball games as adult activities, while Birket-Smith commented that "young men and girls often play ball".⁴

Both football and handball games were found among the Labrador, Iglulik, Caribou, Netsilik and Copper Eskimos. The Mackenzie Eskimos and the Baffin Land Eskimos played handball. On Southampton Island only football was known.⁵

Jenness described ball games among the Copper Eskimos as follows:

²Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos (Vol. V Pt. 2, of The Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-24, Copenhagen, 1929), pp. 118-19.

³Therkel Mathiassen, Material Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos, (Vol. VI, no. 1 of The Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-24, Copenhagen, 1928), p. 222.

⁴Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, op. cit., Vol. V, Pt. 1, p. 273.

⁵Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, op. cit., Vol. V, Pt. 2, p. 288.

Football or handball, for the ball is both kicked along the ground and thrown from hand to hand, is played occasionally by the natives of Bathurst Inlet, who learned it, Ilatsiak said, from the Netsilik Eskimos. The ball ekitak, is made of hairless deer-skin like the membrane of the drum, but no information was obtained on how the game itself is played.⁶

Ball games were not commonly played by the other Copper Eskimos.⁷

Catch, or "atariaq" was described by Mathiassen as it was played by the Iglulik Eskimos. One player stood in the middle with the others around him. The ball, which was usually of sealskin filled with gravel, was knocked alternately to the center player and to those around him without being held.⁸ Low recorded a similar game which involved batting the ball backwards and forwards with the open hand, the object being to prevent it from touching the ground.⁹ Boas also described a game which involved one man throwing the ball among the players, whose object it was to keep it always in motion without allowing it to touch the ground.¹⁰

⁶Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimo Vol. XII of The Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-18, Ottawa, 1923), p. 222.

⁷Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos (Vol. V, Pt. 2, op. cit., p. 119.

⁸Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 222.

⁹A. P. Low, Cruise of the Neptune (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1906), pp. 174-5.

¹⁰Franz Boas, The Central Eskimo (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), p. 162.

Boas also described a game which involved one man throwing the ball among the players, whose object it was to keep it always in motion without allowing it to touch the ground.

A game which was a favourite among the Eskimo children, according to Lewis, involved throwing a seal bladder from hand to hand.¹¹ Cartwright also described catch which was played by the Eskimos in Labrador.

At sun-set, the Indians amused themselves with playing at ball; this amusement consisted only in tossing the ball at pleasure from one to another, each striving who should get it; but I soon perceived they were bad catchers.¹²

Catch requiring no particular toy or plaything was common, according to Birket-Smith. He recorded that "in the light summer evenings the camp resounds with (aumak, aumak), you are on".¹³

A keep away game was played in several ways by the Eskimos. Ataujartut was played by the Iglulik Eskimos, by taking two sides, sometimes with the men opposing the women. The object was to keep passing the ball to and

¹¹Arthur Lewis, The Life and Work of the Rev. E. J. Peck Among the Eskimos (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), p. 50.

¹²George Cartwright, A Journal of Transactions and Events During the Residence of Nearly Sixteen Years on the Coast of Labrador (London, 1792), p. 107.

¹³Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, op. cit., p. 267.

fro, and to prevent the opposing side from getting it. Each player could only retain it a moment.¹⁴ Among the Caribou Eskimos, Birket-Smith found that sides were also taken according to sex, and that the ball could only be taken in one hand.¹⁵ Stefannson described this game, played with the women on one side and the men on the other, but some men helped the women's side. He was told that there were no regulations and that the ball could even be taken out of an opponent's hand by force. He never saw this done, but recorded that "pushing, etc. was frequent". He was also told that the game was played before the whites arrived.¹⁶

Harrington described such a game of ball as follows:

Another group had found a softball. In this game two played together, tossing the ball between them, and others tried to intercept it. Pregnant women were mixed up in this, mothers with babies on their backs, a very old man, and all the children. I joined them. We slid, we stumbled, we took many spills. The game shifted here and there over the ice, the ball bouncing in all directions. Sometimes a tiny kid would grab the ball, then patter across the ice, hell-bent for the hills, with all of us in pursuit yelling.¹⁷

¹⁴Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 222.

¹⁵Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, op. cit., p. 274.

¹⁶Vilhjalmur Stefansson, The Stefansson-Anderson Expedition, Vol. XIV of the Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, New York: Published by order of the Trustees, 1915), p. 165.

¹⁷Richard Harrington, The Face of the Arctic (New York: Henry Schuman, 1952), p. 324.

Birket-Smith described a handball which was made of two pieces of unhaired caribou skin, sewn together at the edges and probably filled with sand. Its greatest diameter was nine centimeters.¹⁸ Boas described the ball of the Central Eskimos, which was most frequently used in the summer. It was sealskin, stuffed with moss and neatly trimmed with skin straps.¹⁹

Games of football ranged from children kicking a seal bladder about²⁰ to a whole camp or two neighboring camps arranging matches of football.²¹ Birket-Smith made the following comment regarding the indigenous nature of football.

John Davis' crew in 1586 arranged a regular game of football with the Greenlanders round what is now Godthabb. It therefore sounds very improbable when Payne writes of the people at Cape Prince of Wales in Hudson Strait: "During my stay here football was introduced," and in no other source -- on this point there are exceptionally many -- from Labrador is there the slightest indication that football was a strange element.²²

Footballs were larger than handballs, and were filled with moss. A specimen from the Caribou Eskimos

¹⁸Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, op. cit., p. 273.

¹⁹Franz Boas, The Central Eskimo (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), p. 162.

²⁰Julian W. Bilby, op. cit., p. 144.

²¹Kaj Birket-Smith, The Eskimos, op. cit., p. 157.

²²Ibid., p. 157.

was made of unhaired caribou skin with each end decorated with a circular disc of dark, unhaired sealskin. From disc to disc ran six meridional strips of the same material. It was slightly flat, with the shortest axis approximately sixteen centimeters. Birket-Smith classed the decoration as an imitation of the stitching of a European ball. The only rules which he observed for the game were that each side must keep the ball away from its goal. He also noted that the coast Padlimiut did not play football, while he made the above observations among the Hauneqtormiut.²³

Low recorded that men, women, and children played football with a ball of feathers or deer hair covered with deer-skin. He did not observe any rules, but noted that each individual played for himself.²⁴

Mention was made of the belief that those who died a violent death were compensated by being transported to the highest heaven. This was located in the Aurora Borealis where "they spend their time with shades of like fate, playing foot-ball with a walrus head."²⁵

Footballs used by the Mackenzie Eskimos were three

²³Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, op. cit., p. 273.

²⁴A. P. Low, op. cit., p. 174.

²⁵E. W. Hawkes, op. cit., p. 109.

to five inches in diameter. The outside was often white fish skin, and the stuffing was fine wood shavings or whalebone.²⁶

Lofthouse gave the following description of football:

After our feast, as it was a fine day, we all turned out to play football. The Eskimos are very fond of all kinds of games, and make good athletes. Women with babies on their backs also joined freely in the game. I was at first very much afraid to see them constantly rolled over in the snow, but they went at it again as if nothing had happened. They are all good runners, and with the greatest glee and good humour rolled one another over in the snow, reminding me of polar bears at play.²⁷

A Pond Bay Eskimo claimed that the Netchillik had no bone on the top of their head, and when they were playing football the throbbing of the brain showed.²⁸

Blanket-tossing. Stefansson wrote about a favorite activity called blanket-tossing.

The blanket-tossing I have not seen; formerly a big seal hide with handles was used. The woman tossed kept on her feet if she could, and was thrown twelve to fifteen feet in the air, it is said. Broken bones and dislocated joints were often the result. I have seen women who have been pointed out as having broken arms, clavicles, etc.²⁹

²⁶Vilhjalmur Stefansson, op. cit., p. 169.

²⁷J. Lofthouse, A Thousand Miles From a Post Office (Toronto: The MacMillan Co., 1922), p. 14.

²⁸Franz Boas, Second Report on the Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay (Vol. XV of The American Museum of Natural History Bulletins, 1907), p. 481.

²⁹Vilhjalmur Stefansson, op. cit., p. 165.

Menager illustrated a similiar activity from among the Alaskan Eskimos. Fifteen individuals were shown holding a circular piece of material while an additional person was shown raised above it in the air.³⁰

Bow and arrow. During special feast days, the bow and arrow were frequently used. Jenness stated that the adults on Victoria Island, during a feast day, set up a clod of earth for a target and shot at it with their arrows.³¹ Boas described a shooting match the day after a Sedna ceremony.

The day after, the men frequently join in a shooting match. A target is set up, at which they shoot their arrows. As soon as a man hits, the women, who stand looking on, rush forward and rub noses with him.³²

There were contests with the bow and arrow at the trading feast described by Bilby.

There are contests with bow and arrow. Poles are fixed in the ground with skins suspended from them to represent deer and seals. The vital spot, of course, is the Eskimo idea of the bull's eye.³³

Jenness illustrated the men amusing themselves at archery³⁴

³⁰Francis M. Menager S. J. The Kingdom of the Seal (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1962), p. 131.

³¹Diamond Jenness, op. cit., p. 138.

³²Franz Boas, op. cit., p. 201.

³³Julian W. Bilby, Among Unknown Eskimo (London: Seeley Service & Co., 1923), p. 241.

³⁴Diamond Jenness, The People of the Twilight (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 128.

and he described such an occasion as follows:

They set up a clod of turf about a foot square, and, standing back forty paces, shot at it with their bows. Only about one arrow in twenty hit the target, so that either their marksmanship was poor or their bows very inferior. Since they had all practiced archery from childhood, and two of the men, Ikpuck and The Runner, were noted hunters, the fault evidently lay in their bows. These belonged to the type technically known as "composite" like the well-known Tarter bows. The framework was of three pieces of wood rudely joined together, two end pieces or horns curving backward and a middle piece. All the back of the wood was covered with a narrow band of seal-skin over which³⁵ was lashed a pair of stout cords of twisted sinew.

The sinew gave spring, and driftwood or poorest quality spruce made the frame. Crude materials and crude workmanship made the balance uneven, so although the maximum range was about 125 yards, the effective range of these bows hardly exceeded 25 yards. He had seen the Listner miss at 15 yards.³⁶

Archery as a recreation was also mentioned by Zuk.³⁷ Cartwright described an occasion of target practice in Labrador as follows:

Monday, July 6, 1772. I had but little trade today. The Indians were diverting themselves with shooting at a mark with their arrows; but I cannot say, that I think them good archers, although their bows are constructed on an excellent principle; for by the assistance of a back-string the bow preserves its elastic power, and by slackening or tightening this string, it is rendered weak enough for a child of five years old, or strong enough for the most powerful

³⁵ Ibid., p. 162.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 10.

man amongst them. As there is something particular in their sport of to-day, I shall endeavour to describe it. They provide two targets of four feet square, made of sticks, and covered with deer-skins. These they fix on poles about eight feet high, and at sixty yards distance from each other. That party which puts the most arrows into the target, gains the honour, for they have not the least idea of gaming. The victors immediately set up shouts of mockery and derision at the conquered party; these they continue for some time; when the wives and daughters of the conquerors join in the triumph, and wailing in procession round the targets, sing a song upon the occasion, priding themselves not a little with the defeat of their opponents, who at length join in the laugh against themselves, and all are friends again, without any offence (seemingly) being either given or taken. Upon this occasion the women wear a pair of clean gloves, made of the skins of white foxes or hares, and these they endeavour to make as much show of as possible, by holding up and displaying their hands. At a little distance they look very well, but on inspection, they do not seem to be calculated so much for use as ornament; the fur being on the outside. They are dressed likewise in their best clothes and large boots, and having marched round the targets, they retire to one side whilst the men renew their sport.³⁸

Boy on ice. Hutton described the following instance of putting another boy on a piece of ice.

The favourite idea is to put a boy on a big ice-pan and shove him away into deep water, and then, after leaving him helpless for a suitable time, to scramble and pole along to rescue him. Sometimes a dog is pressed into service to play this Robinson Crusoe sort of role; but the dog generally considers itself in real danger, and does not wait for a formal rescue; on the contrary, it takes matters into its own hands (or paws), and after a time of terrified whining slips miserably into the water and swims ashore.³⁹

³⁸George Cartwright, op. cit., pp. 108-9.

³⁹S. K. Hutton, Among the Eskimos of Labrador, op. cit., p. 97.

Crack the whip. "Ussutaq" was played like "crack the whip", with the players joining hands to form a line, and the person who let go as the line snaked and wound, got his belly button touched according to Zuk.⁴⁰

Dice. One form of dice was played with ivory images of birds. In describing this game in Labrador, Hawkes recorded that fifteen to eighteen figures were used, and sometimes small images of men and women were included. The players sat around a dressed sealskin, shook the images in their hand and threw them up, those that fell upright belonging to the player. The person who succeeded in getting the greatest number was declared the winner.⁴¹ Boas recorded the same game and he commented that they threw by turn until the last figure was taken up.⁴²

The game of dominoes described by Low was a game of chance, played with small slabs of ivory resembling dominoes but having a greater number of spots on them. The slabs were thrown in the air, and the number of spots on the slabs that fell right side up, were counted.⁴³

⁴⁰William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 6.

⁴¹E. W. Hawkes, The Labrador Eskimo (Department of Mines Geological Survey, Memoir 91, Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1916), p. 121.

⁴²Franz Boas, op. cit., p. 159.

⁴³A. P. Low, op. cit., pp. 175-6.

Hall was given twelve miniature ducks and other sea-birds carved in walrus ivory which he said were the type used in a variety of games.⁴⁴

Several ivory figures from Repulse Bay were described by Mathiassen, and they were about 3.6 centimeters long, and decorated with from one to three rows of dots lengthwise along the back. From the Iglulik, whom he said do not seem to know the use of these figures in dice games, he recorded an undecorated figure 1.4 centimeters long. He discussed these figures under children's activities.⁴⁵

In addition, the Netsilik Eskimos were found to have used toe bones, and the Baffin Land Eskimos had bird figures.⁴⁶ Boas described a game of dice among the Eskimos of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay.

The bones from the seal-flippers are also used for a game. Each bone represents a certain animal or an old or a young person. They are divided into two equal parts. One bone is picked up from each pile, held up a few inches, and then let drop. Should one land right side up, it is looked upon as though it had thrown the other down in a fight. The one which fell wrong side up is then set aside, and another from the same pile is tried with the successful one in this way. This is carried on until one side wins. Then the last bone to win is called the bear, being the strongest of all. The player who

⁴⁴Charles Francis Hall, Arctic Researches and Life Among the Esquimaux (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1865), p. 570.

⁴⁵Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 218.

⁴⁶Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 2, op. cit., p. 290.

has lost the game so far takes the bone, holds it to his forehead, and lets it drop. If it should land right side up, it is looked upon as though the bear had thrown him. Otherwise he is stronger than the bear.⁴⁷

Birket-Smith recorded a similar game among the Caribou Eskimos but did not find that the bird figures were used. Instead, caribou toe bones were used. Two players set up their "men" in a row before them, and then took turns to throw them. Again the game was to get the men to stand, but this time the player whose men were the first overturned lost.⁴⁸ He noted that this game was played with the unworked metatarsal or toe bones of various animals.⁴⁹ He warned that it would be incorrect to assume that because bird figures were found in a place, dice was played. Such was the case on Southampton Island where bird figures were ordinary playthings.⁵⁰

On the other hand they represent such a definitely limited and uniform type that their use as a toy is presumably secondary and due to degeneration. We have thus the peculiar but by no means unique phenomenon, that we have the higher developed type bird figures on the outskirts of the region and in the Central regions only from numerous finds from the Thule culture, whereas the simple type unworked bones, is nowadays used in the Central region.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Franz Boas, The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay (Vol. XV of the American Museum of Natural History Bulletins, New York, 1901), p. 112.

⁴⁸ Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, op. cit., p. 277.

⁴⁹ Ibid., Pt. 2, p. 120. ⁵⁰ Ibid. ⁵¹ Ibid.

Turner reported that a similar condition existed in the Ungava district.⁵²

According to Meldgaard the swimming birds were most common among the small sculptures left in the settlements of the Thule Culture. Their original function was uncertain, and it may have been associated with magic as they are often shown with a woman's head. Information from more recent times reveals that the figures were used as a kind of dice.⁵³ Giddings illustrated a bird figure with human foreparts typical of the Thule culture, which he suggested were probably used in a game similar to jacks played by some modern Eskimos. He stated that these figures were foreign to the Iglulik.⁵⁴

Turner reported on a similar game from the West end of Hudson Strait. There were sets of pieces of ivory, cut into irregular shapes and marked on one face with spots arranged in different patterns. A set consisted of 60 to 148 pieces, and two or more played, depending on the number of pieces in the set. They sat down and

⁵²L. M. Turner, *Ethnology of the Ungava District, Hudson Bay Territory* (Washington Bureau of American Ethnology Reports, Vol. XI, 1889), p. 260.

⁵³Jorgen Meldgaard, *Eskimo Sculpture* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1960), p. 28.

⁵⁴J. Louis Giddings, *Ancient Men of the Arctic* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), p. 75.

piled the pieces before them. One mixed the pieces in plain view and then called for the players to take their pieces. Each endeavored to take the appropriate portion. The mixer laid down a piece and called on his opponent to match it with a piece having similar design. If it could not be done, the first player had to match it and play continued until one player exhausted all the pieces he had taken. The pieces were designed in pairs, having names such as sled, canoe, navel, many, one, two, three, four, and five. Each of the names had to match with a piece of a similar kind, although the other end of the piece could have been of a different design. A sled piece could be matched with the piece called many, if the latter had no line or bar across it, in which case it had to be matched with another of the same kind. This activity, known only to the Ungava people, had been learned from the Eskimos to the north. The latter were known to stake last articles and even wives on the outcome, and he reported that wives so disposed of often sat down and won themselves back to their former owner.⁵⁵

Regarding ivory waterfowl from the area, Turner stated that they were simply tests of the skill of the maker who prepared them as children's toys, and on no occasion had he seen or heard of them being used among

⁵⁵L. M. Turner, op. cit., p. 257.

these Eskimos as objects in a game.⁵⁶

Drinking competitions. Jenness described drinking competitions among the Caribou Eskimos. In drinking seal broth, the last one to drain his cup was ridiculed and called by the name of some decrepit old person.⁵⁷

Dualis. Simple tests of strength between two persons were often observed. Arm bending or sunnila was illustrated by Zuk. It was an activity in which each player attempted to bend his opponent's outstretched arm at the elbow. Two men were depicted, standing in a face to face position, one with his right arm outstretched and apparently resting on the upper left arm of the opponent, while the latter had the left hand in an over-grip at the first player's elbow.⁵⁸

Hanbury illustrated a trial of strength in which two contestants lay face down, head to head, with a strap behind their necks and each one tried to pull the opponents head toward himself.⁵⁹ The men had their arms extended so as to lift their bodies off the ground and only their hands and feet touched the ground.⁶⁰ These

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 260.

⁵⁷Diamond Jenness, op. cit., p. 219.

⁵⁸William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 2.

⁵⁹David T. Hanbury, op. cit., p. 2.

⁶⁰Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. IV, Pt. 1, op. cit., p. 272.

activities were reportedly engaged in by young people.⁶¹

Zuk illustrated an ear pulling contest, "ajaraq", with a cord looped behind the left ear of one man who is on his hands and knees facing his opponent, in the same position with the cord around his right ear.⁶²

Jenness referred to such an activity of the Mackenzie Eskimo children.

One child places an end of the loop over his ear and another does the same with the other end. The two then pull against each other until one, unable to bear the pain, gives in or the loop slips off an ear. The Mackenzie river natives in our party were teaching this game to the Copper Eskimos.⁶³

Arsaarartuq, which was a wrist, finger, or elbow lock and pull, described by Zuk, was illustrated by two men standing each with his right arm and leg forward, the foot to the inside of the opponent's corresponding foot.⁶⁴

One of the most common forms of matching strength required that the contestants face each other, with the right foot advanced, and placed against that of the opponent. They hooked their right arms, or held each other's right wrist and then tried to pull the opponent

⁶¹Kaj Birket-Smith, The Eskimos (London: Methuen, 1959), p. 157.

⁶²William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 7.

⁶³Diamond Jenness, Vol. V, Pt. B, op. cit., p. 180.

⁶⁴William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 5.

off balance. This was also done with the fingers, and with the arm around the opponent's neck and the forefinger in the corner of his mouth, according to Birket-Smith, reporting on the Caribou Eskimos.⁶⁵

Kroeber reported finger and arm pulling from the Eskimo of Smith Sound.⁶⁶

Harper described a similar activity which he observed Caribou Eskimo children participating in.

The following day, Kakoot and Amelok engaged in a sort of tug of war while sitting opposite each other in the cabin. They had a double loop of strong cord, like a small tent rope, and each took hold of an end with one hand, generally pulling down a sleeve over that hand as a sort of mitten or pad. Then each would pull toward himself with flexed elbow, frequently bracing the other hand on his opponent's shoulder.⁶⁷

Boas described the procedures which were taken to welcome a stranger among the Central Eskimos.

If a stranger unknown to the inhabitants of a settlement arrives on a visit he is welcomed by the celebration of a great feast. Among the southeastern tribes the natives arrange themselves in a row, one man standing in front of it. The stranger approaches slowly, his arms folded and his head inclined toward the right side. Then the native strikes him with all his strength on the right cheek and in his turn inclines his head awaiting the stranger's blow (tigluiadjung). While this is going on the other men are playing at ball and singing (igdlukitaqtung). Thus they continue until one of the combatants is vanquished.

⁶⁵Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, op. cit., p. 272.

⁶⁶A. L. Kroeber, op. cit., p. 300.

⁶⁷Francis Harper, Caribou Eskimos of the Upper Kazan River, Keewatin (Kansas: The Allen Press, 1964), p. 41.

The ceremonies of greeting among the western tribes are similar to those of the eastern, but in addition "boxing, wrestling, and knife testing" are mentioned by travellers who have visited them. In Davis Strait and probably in all the other countries the game of "hook and crook" is always played on the arrival of a stranger (pakijumijartung). Two men sit down on a large skin, after having stripped the upper part of their bodies, and each tries to stretch out the bent arm of the other. These games are sometimes dangerous as the victor has the right to kill his adversary, but generally the feast ends peaceably. The ceremonies of the western tribes is greeting a stranger are much feared by their eastern neighbors and therefore intercourse is somewhat restricted. The meaning of the duel, according to the natives themselves, is "that the two men in meeting wish to know which of them is the better man." The similarity of these ceremonies with those of Greenland, where the game of hook and crook and wrestling matches have been customary, is quite striking, as is that of the explanation of these ceremonies.⁶⁸

Boas described this game as two men striking each other on the shoulders, while their wives sat on the bed and sang until one of the men gave in. The one who was the most enduring won the game.⁶⁹ Low also described such an activity.

Boxing as we understand it is not practiced, but they have hitting contests, where one man stands unguarded and allows another to hit him as powerful a blow as he is capable of, on the understanding that the blow may be returned under similar conditions. When such a contest takes place between strangers it often leads to the vanquished one, if at home, revenging himself upon the stranger with his knife, and altogether is a rather dangerous

⁶⁸Franz Boas, The Central Eskimo, op. cit., p. 201.

⁶⁹Franz Boas, Second Report on the Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay, op. cit., p. 482.

pastime for grown men, although good for boys.⁷⁰

Mathiassen described it as a method of greeting a strange tribe.

The method is that two men strike each other, in turn with the closed hand, either on the left temple (quperneq) or on the bare left shoulder (tigaluneq); the blow is struck with the inner side of the hand and describes a horizontal curve from right to left.⁷¹ The one who holds out the longest is the winner.

He called the activity "fisticuffs", and also indicated that danger was involved, commenting that an old man on Southampton killed a Netsilik by a blow on the temple. The practice was used among the Iglulik to settle disputes. In the 1920's, however, he found that it was only the young people who amused themselves in this manner, and they always stopped in good time.⁷²

Trials of strength, which strangers had to undergo, were also noted by Birket-Smith, who found that they had gone out of style among the Caribou Eskimos but were retained in regions around the magnetic pole.⁷³

Follow the leader. Boas described an activity which was sometimes played on the ice in spring.

⁷⁰A. P. Low, op. cit., p. 175.

⁷¹Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 221.

⁷²Ibid., p. 220.

⁷³Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, op. cit., p. 267.

The men stand in a circle on the ice, and one of them walks, the toes turned inward, in a devious track. It is said that only a few are able to do this in the right way. Then the rest of the men have to follow him in exactly the same track.⁷⁴

Handles for trials of strength. Two round sticks connected by a skin strap were used for trials of strength. They were only known from a few places but were scattered from Greenland to the Bering Strait.⁷⁵ They were found among the Iglulik, Caribou, and Netsilik Eskimos.⁷⁶

A specimen described by Birket-Smith had two handles of 9.5 and 9.9 centimeters long respectively, and a distance of 10.5 centimeters between them.⁷⁷

Zuk illustrated such a game, showing two men seated, each with the bottoms of his feet against those of the other player. Both had their right arm forward, each grasping one handle of the apparatus. One man is leaning slightly forward, the other leans backward.⁷⁸

Hand game. The hand game or "tip it" was played by two men who sat opposite each other.

⁷⁴Franz Boas, The Central Eskimo, op. cit., Appendix, Note 3.

⁷⁵Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 2, op. cit., p. 119.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 290.

⁷⁷Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, op. cit., p. 272.

⁷⁸William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 3.

One takes a stone and holds his hands down in his lap so that the opponent cannot see in which hand the stone is concealed. The latter then claps his hands once and holds out the one corresponding to that which he believes holds the stone.⁷⁹ The game goes very quickly and is quite amusing.

Records of this game were predominantly from the Eastern subcultures, including the Labrador, Iglulik, Caribou and Netsilik Eskimos.⁸⁰ A similar game was noted by Low among the Iglulik Eskimos, which consisted in guessing the number of articles held in the closed hand.⁸¹

Turner found that young girls often took an object and hid it in the hand. Another was called upon to guess the contents, by inquiring as to size, color, and other characteristics.⁸²

Downes, in his account of the game from among the Indians, mentioned that contests were held between the Eskimos and Indians.⁸³ Mowat gave the following description of such contests.

The favorite gambling game of the Ihalmiut is, like so many things in their culture, almost indistinguishable from an Indian counterpart. To play it, two men or two teams of men face each other over the expanse of a robe. The "dealer" has a stone or

⁷⁹Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 290.

⁸¹A. P. Low, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

⁸²L. M. Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

⁸³P. G. Downes, *Sleeping Island* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1943), pp. 238-9.

some other small object concealed in his hand and very rapidly he places that hand under the robe, then under his backside as he squats on the ground, then behind his back, and finally he holds the clenched fist up in full view of his opponent. Instantly the second man must indicate where he thinks the object is-- in the hand, under the buttock, behind the back or under the robe. When, and if, he guesses correctly by putting his own hand in the corresponding spot, he becomes the dealer. The odds against him are three to one, and he may lose just about everything he owns before he gets a chance to carry the ball, but then he usually wins everything back again, with interest. The game is played with such speed that it is almost impossible to follow the motions of the players and, if nothing⁸⁴ else, it makes for a remarkable quickness of eye.

According to Mowat, Chipewayans at one time held gambling contests with their blood enemies, the Ihalmiut, on the borderline of their territories and he heard of one such game which lasted two days and two nights. At the end, the Eskimos held all the wealth of the Indians and they levelled their rifles and spears at the losers to prevent what threatened to become a sanguinary battle. Among themselves, the Ihalmiut, aware of the possibility of starvation as a consequence of losing their equipment, customarily return the goods won at the end of the game. One player may thus lose the same rifle several times in a single evening.⁸⁵

⁸⁴Farley Mowat, People of the Deer (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1952), p. 162.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 163.

Hidden ball. A guessing game for little children was described by Jenness.

The seeker has to guess which of a number of players has hidden some object under his coat. A modification of this game is often played by two children only. Sitting opposite, one closes his eyes while the other takes a sliver of wood or any convenient object and hides it, usually on the shoulder or at the side of his companion. The child then opens his eyes and glances round to see where it lies. If he fails to find it immediately, his rival will point it out with a whoop of delight, then close his eyes in his turn.⁸⁶

This game was recorded from among the Copper Eskimos.

Harper, among the Caribou Eskimos, noted that children played a game indoors similar to "who's got the button".⁸⁷

Hide and seek. Hide and seek, described by Jenness, was one of the most common of the children's games,⁸⁸ and in mid-winter they played this game out-doors.⁸⁹

Half of the children form a ring, keeping their eyes fixed on the ground, while the other half run away and hide. The seekers occasionally intone a kind of chant e-e-e-e-e, before breaking off and beginning their search; more usually they merely await the signal from those in hiding. The latter are sought out one by one and⁹⁰ captured, when they in their turn become the seekers.

⁸⁶Diamond Jenness, op. cit., pp. 218-19.

⁸⁷Francis Harper, op. cit., p. 21.

⁸⁸Diamond Jenness, op. cit., p. 218.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 115.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 218.

Harper also recorded that children among the Caribou Eskimos played this game in the long grass of the river meadow.⁹¹

Hoop and pole. The hoop and pole game was played by the Copper Eskimo children in winter. It was one of the commonest games requiring special equipment. The hoop (titkat or titkattak) was of willow and approximately fifteen inches in diameter, while the pole was a stick of two to three feet. They either bowled the hoops at random along the ground and threw their sticks through them, or they would fling the hoops into the air and try to catch them on the sticks.⁹² Hoop and pole was forbidden except in winter.⁹³

Stefansson gave the following description of the hoop and pole game.

Kaivaalugak is the larger hoop, itirkorak is the smaller. The counters are nappaikkat. Nauligak is the forked spear; kannautik is the fork. They should be so long they cannot get through the big hoop; kannautailak is the one without fork. The former one may be thrown either end first. Kaivsal-ugaktut is playing this game (Kaiv-gaiv). Either s spear may be used on either hoop. Each man may have one spear only or one spear of each, as he likes. Men and boys and unmarried women if they liked took part. The crowd was evenly divided in two groups about twenty-five yards apart. The large hoop was

⁹¹Francis Harper, op. cit., p. 21.

⁹²Diamond Jenness, op. cit., p. 220.

⁹³Ibid., p. 218.

a foot or over in diameter, the smaller about four inches. The people of one party rolled these one after the other (the big first); those of the other tried to spear both at about three to five yards as they passed. For each hoop speared, the tally was one; there was no added credit for two spears through one hoop and no more for spearing little than big hoops. The counters were of an indefinite number, but were divided evenly in two piles. Winners took one from the rollers' heap for each hoop speared. The game was over when one heap was exhausted, but another game was soon started.⁹⁴

The game was never played in the summer, but chiefly in the dark days and from then until spring.⁹⁵

Ice spin. Boas mentioned a game from the West coast of Hudson Bay, in which a man sat on a piece of ice shaped like a top and was whirled round and round.

A large cake of ice is formed in the shape of a top (kipekutuk) with a flat surface and a dull point which fits into a shallow hole. One man sits down on the piece of ice, while two others spin it around by means of sticks. This game is often indulged in at the floe edge, when waiting for the pack-ice to come in with the tide. Generally a man who is the butt of all the others is induced to sit on this top and is spun around until he is made sick.⁹⁶

Jumping spring board. Only one reference to the jumping spring board was located, and it was considered to be a favorite amusement.⁹⁷

Knuckle bone. Stefansson described a form of

⁹⁴Franz Boas, The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay, op. cit., pp. 110-11.

⁹⁵Vilhjalmur Stefansson, op. cit., p. 391.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Vilhjalmur Stefansson, op. cit., p. 165.

knuckle bone which was played by the Eskimos at Tuktuyoktok.

Last night we played with match-like sticks about four inches long. We had nine, but lost one later, which seemed to make no difference. The bunch is held on the flat palm, tossed up and caught in the fist, the trick being to catch one stick or any odd number. The odd stick is kept; the throws are invariably alternated between the players. The one⁹⁸ who has the most sticks when all are gone, wins.

Prone wrestling. This game was illustrated as consisting of two players in a prone position, one under the other. The player on top has his arms under and around the arms of the lower player who had to rise without putting his hands on the floor. The top man remained rigid in the game.⁹⁹

Rope circle. A rope game was played by Caribou Eskimo children, in which, according to Jenness, a number of children, all facing in the same direction, cling together within a circle of rope. A child in front turned around and faced the rest, and as they tried to grab him, he backed away against the rope. Thus the whole party was dragged forward until finally one or more of the children tripped over and fell to the ground.¹⁰⁰

Roulette. Roulette was described by Gilder in

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 177.

⁹⁹William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁰⁰Diamond Jenness, op. cit., p. 218.

the following manner.

...placing a prize in a bowl made out of a musk-ox skull, the players standing in a circle around the bowl, which is then set twirling rapidly. The one toward whom the handle points when the bowl stops moving is the winner, and replaces the prize with another. This game ... has no end, and the players only stop when they get hungry and adjourn to eat.¹⁰¹

Although Gilder did not specify whether only the men participated in this activity, it was included in a discussion of men's activities. Birket-Smith, however, indicated that among the Caribou Eskimos the players were mostly women, and that an ordinary soup ladle of musk-ox horn was used.¹⁰² Mathiassen described a similar game for adults among the Iglulik.

The game of saqataq is played in the following manner; a knife is laid on the platform and spun round and the person at whom the point is directed when it comes to rest is then laughed at, or must fetch ice etc., is pretty, ugly, or whatever may have been agreed upon in advance.¹⁰³

The game described by Boas was played with a leather cup with a rounded bottom and a nozzle. This was placed on a board and turned around. He observed a tin cup which was fastened to the board with a nail and used for the same purpose.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹William H Gilder, Schwatka's Search (New York: Abercrombie & Fitch, 1966), p. 45.

¹⁰²Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, op. cit., p. 277.

¹⁰³Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 220.

¹⁰⁴Franz Boas, The Central Eskimos, op. cit., pp. 160-61.

Wilkinson provided the following information on the traditional equipment:

The house rings turned out to be old tent rings, large boulders placed in a circle about fifteen feet in diameter that had once held down the edges of a sealskin tent. The gambling ring was similar to the tent ring, but made of larger stones spaced about two feet apart. At one time a large flat rock had sat in the center of the circle, but it had been removed by Eskimos who had recently used the site for their tent. The game was apparently a version of what we call spin the bottle. The Eskimos would all stand around the circle with one man in the center. This man would spin a cylindrical or oval-shaped stone on the flat base, and when it stopped collect a forfeit from the Eskimo at whom the spinning stone pointed. Then that man would move in and the play was repeated. Idlouk said that Eskimos used to gamble a great deal in the old days and often for very high stakes, such things as kayaks, hunting gear, and often a wife being gambled away on the turn of a stone.¹⁰⁵

Roulette appears to have been of a predominantly eastern diffusion¹⁰⁶ and it was found among the Baffin Land, Iglulik, Caribou, and Netsilik Eskimos.¹⁰⁷

Silence competitions. Silence competitions were recorded by Jenness. Often the children had silence competitions when a child said ika, and everyone kept perfectly quiet. The first to break the silence lost the game.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵Doug Wilkinson, Land of the Long Day (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company, Ltd., 1955), pp. 140-41.

¹⁰⁶Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 2, op. cit., p. 120.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 290.

¹⁰⁸Diamond Jenness, op. cit., p. 219.

Shut eyes and hit. Tidluktoq was described by Boas from Ponds Bay as played in winter in a large snow-house; or in summer, on the ice.

One person is asked to shut his eyes, and the men stand about not very far away from him, singly. Then the person who has his eyes shut must try to touch one of the other people. As soon as he succeeds in touching a man, the latter must stand still ready to receive a blow on the side of the head from the person who touched him.¹⁰⁹ Then it is his turn to try to touch another man.

A similar game called uatamanna involved a blindfolded person trying to catch others.¹¹⁰

Blind man's buff "taptajaqtut" among the Caribou Eskimos was played by men like the game first described above, with the player's eyes blindfolded.¹¹¹ Boas recorded that this game was played by women.¹¹²

Skipping. Skipping (atErArtArnEq) was common among the Eskimos.¹¹³ It was recorded among the Iglulik, Southampton Island, Caribou, Netsilik and Copper Eskimos.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹Franz Boas, Second Report on the Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay, op. cit., p. 481.

¹¹⁰William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 10.

¹¹¹Therkel Mathiassen, op. cit., p. 220.

¹¹²Franz Boas, The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay, op. cit., p. 112.

¹¹³Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 2, p. 273.

¹¹⁴Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, p. 290.

Jenness gave the following description of skipping among the Copper Eskimos, where both sexes participated and mainly the young, although he had seen adult men skipping during a migration when the train had stopped to rest. In such cases it was both warming and amusing.

The rope, usually a god trace is swung by two players under the feet of the skipper, then back in the opposite direction. It is thus made to circle backwards and forwards, now in one direction, now in the other, while the skipper hops alternately on each foot. Occasionally he may try to circle round, but usually the rope catches in his feet after the first or second turn. The rope being of raw hide, and very hard, the natives often tie a strip of polar bear skin round the middle to keep it from bruising the ankles.¹¹⁵

Parry gave the following account of skipping.

The Eskimo women and children often amuse themselves with a game not unlike our "skip-rope". This is performed by two women holding the ends of a line and whirling it regularly round and round, while a third jumps over it in the middle according to the following order. She commences by jumping twice on both feet, then alternately with the right and left, and next four times with the feet slipped one behind the other, the rope passing once round at each jump. After this she performs a circle on the ground, jumping about half a dozen times in the course of it, which brings her to her original position, the same thing is repeated as often as it can be performed, this with considerable agility and adroitness, considering the clumsiness of their boots and jackets, and seemed to pride themselves in some degree on the qualification. A second kind of this game consists in two women holding a long rope by its ends and whirling it round in such a manner over the heads of two others standing close together near the middle

¹¹⁵Diamond Jenness, op. cit., p. 221.

of the bight, that each of these shall jump over it alternately. The art, therefore, which is indeed considerable, depends more on those whirling the rope than on the jumpers, who are, however, obliged to keep exact time in order to be ready for the rope passing under their feet.¹¹⁶

Spearing the seal. A game of spearing the seal was played by two boys, with a piece of skin for ice, and a bit of bone that moves about underneath it for the seal. A blow hole and a miniature appear were used.¹¹⁷ Boas described hunting seals as follows:

Boys play hunting seals. Each of them has a small harpoon and a number of pieces of seal-skin with many holes. Each piece of skin represents a seal. Each of the boys also has a hip-bone of the seal. Then one boy moves the piece of skin which represents a seal under the hole in the hip-bone, which latter represents the blowing-hole in the ice. While moving the piece of skin about under the bone, the boys blow like seals. Whoever catches with the little harpoon the piece of skin in one of the holes retains it, and the boy who catches the last of the pieces of skin goes on in turn with his seals. The little harpoons are made by the fathers of the boys, the pieces of skin are prepared by their mothers.¹¹⁸

Tag. Caribou Eskimo children, according to Birket-Smith, play a game of tag, called wolf and raven. One child was made the hunter; the others ran off flapping their arms and croaking like ravens or leaping and howling like wolves. Whoever was caught first then became the

¹¹⁶ Sir. W. E. Parry, op. cit., Vols. III and IV, pp. 68-9.

¹¹⁷ Julian W. Bilby, op. cit., p. 144.

¹¹⁸ Franz Boas, The Central Eskimo, op. cit., p. 111.

hunter. Adults as well as children sometimes played this game, especially at halts during a migration, when exercise was needed to keep up the circulation of the blood.¹¹⁹

Harper described tag which was played in the evening twilight when the blackflies would be subsiding for a few hours of semi-darkness. The game was kept up for long periods of time.¹²⁰

Threading the needle. Cartwright described an occasion on which, after teaching the Labrador Eskimos the sport of threading the needle, they displayed a similar game. This may have been an adaptation of what he had just taught them, and therefore not an example of indigenous play.

They had likewise a game much resembling that of threading-the-needle; but instead of the last couple turning hands over head, the leader ran round, till they were all wound up in a circle; when pulling and hauling different ways, they tumbled over each other, and thus finished their sport.¹²¹

Tug of war. A tug of war between the people born in the summer and those born in the winter, took place during the Sedna ceremony performed on Baffin Island in

¹¹⁹Diamond Jenness, op. cit., p. 218.

¹²⁰Francis Harper, op. cit., p. 21.

¹²¹George Cartwright, op. cit., p. 107.

the autumn.¹²² The significance of it was that if the team of those born in winter won there would be plenty of food, but if they did not, there was to be bad weather. This contest of the seasons, with those born in summer opposing those born in winter, was played with a large rope of sealskin.¹²³

Harrington described a tug-of-war more recently.

Now the rope lay where it had fallen on the ice. A youngster grabbed one end of it, shouting. Someone grabbed the other end. A second, a third, a fourth jumped to one end or the other and heaved. There was a mass attack on the rope, of both sexes and all ages. Whenever one side gave way, new ones jumped in to help out. Eventually one group, exhausted, was pulled down into a pile. The game broke up in laughter. But a few minutes later, quite unrehearsed and uncoached, the same thing would happen again.¹²⁴

Whipping an object. A whip was used to drive a ball in Baffin Land and Labrador, but not among the Caribou Eskimos.¹²⁵ According to Zuk, this game was played with large whips, and the two opponents endeavoured to hit a target which lay between them.¹²⁶ He described another game, "ijuttaut", which was played on the ice with two walrus hide whips and knuckle bones from caribou.

¹²²Edward Moffat Weyer, Jr., The Eskimos: Their Environment and Folkways (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), p. 359.

¹²³Franz Boas, The Central Eskimos, op. cit., p. 197.

¹²⁴Richard Harrington, op. cit., p. 322.

¹²⁵Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt., 1, op. cit., p. 274.

¹²⁶William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 9.

Two men were pictured with whips, one on each side of a cord which was stretched on pegs and appeared to run through the center of the bone.¹²⁷

Boas described a game which was played in a similar manner.

A leather ball filled with hard clay is propelled with a whip, the last of which is tied up in a coil. Every man has his whip and is to hit the ball and so prevent his fellow players from getting at it.¹²⁸

He also recorded that an evening was spent in playing ball and that it was whipped all around the settlement.¹²⁹

Turner described the game as very popular for every age. The ball was three to seven inches in diameter; an imperfect sphere of buckskin or sealskin. It was made by gathering the edges of a circular piece, stuffing this with dry moss or feathers, and inserting a circular piece to fill the space left by the incomplete gatherings. It was very light and was kicked as well as whipped. The whip had a wooden handle of eight to twelve inches long.¹³⁰

To prevent it from slipping out of the hand when the blow is struck, a stout thong of sealskin is made to form a long loop which is passed over the hand and tightens around the wrist. To the further end of the whip handle are attached a number of stout thongs

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 4.

¹²⁸Franz Boas, The Central Eskimos, op. cit., p. 162.

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 198.

¹³⁰L. M. Turner, op. cit., p. 256.

of heavy sealskin. These thongs have their ends tied around the handle and thus form a number of loops of 12 to 20 inches in length. These are then tied together at the bottom in order to give them greater weight when the ball is struck by them.¹³¹

He noted that it was often sent over a hundred yards, with enough force to knock a person down. At Fort Chimo it was played during the late winter afternoons at thirty to forty degrees below zero. When two irregular hemispheres were joined to make a sphere, it could only be rolled in a certain direction, and he wrote that it was awkward and produced confusion by its erratic course.¹³²

Whips. Hutton described an activity which boys played with full-sized whips. "Two of them wage a hot battle, each trying to entangle the other's lash."¹³³

Wrestling. According to Birket-Smith, wrestling was known to all the Eskimos.¹³⁴ "Unatartuq" was illustrated by Zuk as two men standing facing each other, one grasping the other around the chest.¹³⁵

¹³¹Ibid., p. 257.

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³S. K. Hutton, op. cit., p. 94.

¹³⁴Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 1, op. cit., p. 119.

¹³⁵William M. Zuk, op. cit., p. 3.

Jenness wrote about an occasion on which wrestling was done among the Copper Eskimos.

One stormy night in the winter of 1915, after the natives had been dancing for some time in the dance-house, Ulaksak suggested a wrestling match. Some one called out "Hold a seance," and immediately everyone began to talk about the ill-luck they had been experiencing owing to the constant storms. Uloksak, however, laid aside the drum he had just been using, and began the tournament by throwing his arms around one of the men and dragging him into the ring. Tripping with the feet is not allowed in these contests; each man grasps his opponent around the neck with one arm and around the waist with the other, and tries by sheer strength to throw his off his feet. A short man is therefore at a great disadvantage, although he may be quite as strong and active as his opponent.¹³⁶

he recorded that one man dislocated his ankle while wrestling in the dance house.¹³⁷ Generally wrestling was practiced in the winter, but it was not limited to that season.¹³⁸ In mid-winter, Jenness wrote that on one occasion a little wrestling and gymnastics had been the only diversions of the Eskimos in the evenings and on days when the blizzards prevented them from sealing.¹³⁹

Turner wrote than the Indian and Eskimo often compared strength in wrestling, the Eskimo proving the better. In the Ungava district it was carried on by the

¹³⁶ Diamond Jenness, op. cit., p. 222.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 171.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 218.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 115.

men for hours at a time.¹⁴⁰

The opponents remove all their superfluous garments, seize each other around the waist and lock hands behind each other's backs. The feet are spread widely apart and each endeavors to draw, by the strength of the arms alone, the back of his opponent into a curve and thus bring him off his feet. Then with a lift he is quickly thrown flat on his back. The fall must be such that the head touches the ground. Where the contestants are nearly matched, the struggle may continue so long that one of them gives up from exhaustion. The feet are never used for tripping. Such a procedure would soon cause the witnesses to stop the struggle.¹⁴¹

Kroeber noted that two rivals for a widow made a peaceful decision by a wrestling duel. The winner then lost the woman in a similar match with a man already married.¹⁴²

II. Discussion

The interaction of the players in this type of activity allowed for a great variety of complexities, although many of the activities were simple.

Wrestling appeared to be standardized to some degree, as tripping with the foot was not allowed.

The minimal number of rules or conventions in simple ball games indicates that many problems which would arise were solved in the same way as in everyday life.

¹⁴⁰L. M. Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

¹⁴²A. L. Kroeber, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

Special roles were performed by some players when one player was used by the other players in placing a boy on the ice and in tossing a woman on a blanket, or when one player performed a function for the others by being the center catcher in playing with the ball and by leading in follow the leader.

Sides were chosen for ball games using the simple devices of sex, season of birth, or camp of residence.

Tests of ability between two (dualis) or several players (crack the ship) produced winners or losers.

Scores were kept in the hoop and pole game.

Payments were made in gambling.

Chance was the obstacle in dice and roulette games.

Additional difficulties were added to skipping.

Turns were taken in dice.

Strategy was important to win in the hand game, and guessing was involved.

Matching was the basis of the domino game.

The seasonality of the hoop and pole game and the religious connections in the tug-of-war suggest adapted activities, but there may have been other factors such as weather conditions involved.

Imitation, an element of symbolic play, was seen

in follow the leader. In playing tag, the wolf and the raven and the hunter were represented symbolically.

CHAPTER VII

ADAPTED PLAY ACTIVITIES

Adapted play activities were, by definition those activities which were restricted by other human institutions. All of the activities described in this chapter were limited by religious taboos. The taboos simply restricted activities to certain seasons, and this would lead to the conclusion that hoop and pole described in collective play activities was also adapted play, but no clear statement of the reason for restricting it to summer was given.

I. Descriptions of the Activities

Cat's cradle. A great deal has been written about cat's cradle in various cultures, and cross-cultural studies have been done. This discussion cannot include all the information which is available on Eskimo cat's cradles so an emphasis has been placed on the significance which various writers attached to their existence.

The following discussion of superstitions concerning cat's cradles (string figures) refers to all the Eskimos, and although the Greenland and Alaskan groups were not included in this study, their relation-

ship with the Canadian Eskimos on this subject is relevant.

Among nearly all Eskimo tribes there were various superstitions concerning string figures, although for the most part they have disappeared under the influence of Europeans. From Kotzebue sound, in Alaska, to Coronation gulf there was a taboo against playing the game except in the winter, when the sun no longer rose above the horizon. The Eskimos of Alaska and the Mackenzie delta have long since abandoned this taboo, and the game has become a pastime for every season of the year; but in Coronation gulf it was observed¹ though not very rigidly, down to the year 1916.

Jenness observed in 1915 that a girl carefully closed the tent door so that the sun would not shine on them, for their taboo was based on a legend "that the sun once beheld a man playing cat's cradles and tickled him".² On another occasion an old man blamed a player for causing the blizzards raging at the time, while Coppermine river natives were reported by Dr. R. M. Anderson to have heard a noise outside while playing in the spring of 1910 and attributing the noise to evil spirits they quickly stopped playing and quietly filed outside.³

The Alaskan Eskimos acknowledged the existence of a definite spirit associated with string figures, and

¹Diamond Jenness, Eskimo Folklore (Vol. XIII, Pt. B, of the Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-18, Ottawa: F. A. Acland, 1924), p. 181.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

such a spirit was reported from Dolphin and Union Strait in 1915.⁴ It was not prominent among the Copper Eskimos so Jenness suggested that it had probably been introduced recently by some western natives.⁵ He found that, among the Copper Eskimos and further west, "young and old play alike; indeed the parents take a special delight in teaching their young children".⁶

Boas noted that the Eskimo of Hudson Bay believed in the following taboo:

Boys must not play cat's-cradle, because in later life their fingers might become entangled in the harpoon-line. They are allowed to play this game when they become adults. Two cases were told of hunters who lost their fingers, having played cat's-cradle when young. Such youths are thought to be particularly liable⁷ to lose their fingers in hunting ground-seal.

In contrast, it was stipulated on the west coast of Hudson Bay, that the natives should play cat's cradle in the fall to prevent the disappearance of the sun. In the spring, cup-and-ball was played to hasten the return of the sun.⁸

⁴Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimos (Vol. XII of the Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-18, Ottawa, 1923), p. 203.

⁵Ibid., p. 182.

⁶Ibid., p. 183.

⁷Franz Boas, The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay, (Vol. XV, Pt. 1, of The American Museum of Natural History Bulletins, 1907), p. 151.

⁸Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimos, op. cit., p. 170.

Wordie also reported the belief that string figures could delay the setting of the sun for at least one or two days by entangling the sun's rays.⁹

Hawkes was unable to get any specimens in the summer from the Labrador Eskimos, although he was told that they made the characteristic forms and the game, a favorite with the women, was used to amuse children.¹⁰

String figures were made with a sealskin cord of approximately six feet in length.¹¹ The string was drawn into shapes of objects and animals.¹² Most of the figures were made by one person, and those requiring two people were frequently made by one person using his foot.¹³ String tricks, such as tying the string on the fingers and then having it fall off, were also played.¹⁴

A story accompanied the movements in string figures in some regions, the Eskimo chanting as he

⁹J. M. Wordie, An Expedition to Northwest Greenland and the Canadian Arctic (Vol. XCII, No. 5, Geographic Journal, 1938), pp. 419-420.

¹⁰E. W. Hawkes, The Labrador Eskimo (Geological Survey, Memoir 91, Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1916), pp. 121-2.

¹¹J. M. Wordie, op. cit., p. 419.

¹²A. L. Kroeber, The Eskimo of Smith Sound (Vol. XII, Bull. of the American Museum of Natural History, 1899), p. 300.

¹³Vera Fidler, "String Figures", The Beaver (Hudson Bay Co. Publication, Winter, 1963, Outfil 294), p. 19.

¹⁴Diamond Jenness, Eskimo Folklore, op. cit., p. 180.

created the figures. One described by Fidler represented two men facing each other.

The player indicates which man is speaking by holding one hand out and the other in, then changing their positions, as he chants:

I'm going to shoot that bird, I made it fly.
I'm going to hit it with a stone too, even if you
did make it fly.
Your grandfather has no knife (sneeringly).
Your grandfather has a knife made of whalebone.
Your grandfather has no boat.
Your grandfather's boat is made of rotten boot-soles.
Well, let's fight it out.

Loops are pulled through each other to indicate the men fighting and finally the figure is broken up.
A spirit carried the men off.¹⁵

String figures were found among all the Eskimo tribes from Alaska to the West Greenlanders.¹⁶ In Northwestern Greenland, the Eskimos had no form of art and stories were therefore illustrated by an extraordinarily large number of string figures.¹⁷

Patersen suggested that these figures were probably survivals of the Thule culture,¹⁸ and Jenness concluded from his study of them that all examples indicated a drift from west to east which was consistent with

¹⁵Vera Fidler, op. cit., p. 20.

¹⁶Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos (Vol. V, Pt. 2, of The Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-24, Copenhagen, 1929), p. 290.

¹⁷J. M. Wordie, op. cit., p. 420.

¹⁸T. T. Paterson, Eskimo String Figures and Their Origin (Fasc III of Acta Artica, Denmark: Societas Artica Scandania, 1949), p. 63.

historical information.¹⁹ In comparing the string figures of the Eskimos, Jenness noted that the figures were similar in the complexity of performance and of realistic interpretation, but among the Melanesians, it was rare to find a sequence of figures illustrating a narrative such as was common among the Eskimos.²⁰

Haddon tabulated the following information of the objects represented by string figures around the world.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTS REPRESENTED BY STRING FIGURES THROUGH-
OUT THE WORLD ²¹

	Africa	Arctic*	N. America+	S. America	Australia	Melanesia	Micronesia	Polynesia	Papau	Total
Celestial	11	2	15	11	18	9	11	15	12	104
Physical Geog.	9	17	2	5	4	4	4	25	9	79
Plants	5	1	1	9	13	9	12	18	23	91
Human	7	29	5	2	8	8	34	7	22	122
Animals	43	141	21	43	56	32	38	53	115	542
Anatomy	5	26	1	5	0	2	2	11	5	57
Objects	47	57	26	23	16	19	24	67	58	337
Social	8	4	4	1	4	5	15	9	27	77
Folk, Magic	4	5	0	1	0	4	13	27	5	59
Rest	22	37	2	2	0	16	7	38	13	137
Total	161	319	77	102	119	108	160	270	289	1605
Tricks	12	12	12	9	0	5	9	20	22	101

*N. America and N.E. Asia.

+Excluding Arctic.

¹⁹Diamond Jenness, Eskimo Folklore, Pt. B, op. cit., p. 189.

Nuglutaq. Nuglutaq was a very popular adult Eskimo game which Jenness described as follows from among the Copper Eskimos:

Bathurst inlet natives who visited the out station early in the spring of 1916 were responsible for the introduction of a new game, nuglutak, into that region. The natives had learned it from the Eskimos of Backs river, so that it has evidently spread north from Hudson bay. About a dozen men and women were playing it in May beside our station. A short flat bone plate about two inches long was made fast by cords of sinew to the ridge pole of the tent above and to a large stone on the floor below, so that it was suspended taut some two feet above the ground. A small hole had been drilled in the middle of the plate, and the natives, sitting all round in a ring, tried to push darts through it, the darts being shafts of wood from two to four feet long pointed with horn. They were all spearing at once, and their darts rattled together and pushed each other away; the plate too quivered and shook, so that sometimes a minute would elapse before one of them penetrated the hole. As one player grew tired and withdrew another took his place. Half of their days for nearly a week were spent in this idle occupation. It was the only game, as far as I know, in which the natives gambled. They would stake knives and cartridges and powder and almost anything else they had, and the same knife would pass through several hands in the course of a single day.²²

Crantz included some different features in his description. Four holes were provided in the nuglutaq,

²⁰Ibid., p. 191.

²¹Kathleen Haddon, Artists in String (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co. Inc., 1930), Appendix, p. 151.

²²Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimos, op. cit., p. 221.

and the women collected around it. Behind them, the men and boys, with long iron-shod sticks, thrust at the swinging target over the heads of their wives. When one was successful, a loud acclamation followed, and the men sat down on a snow seat while the victor went around the house two or three times, singing. He was kissed by all the men and boys, and then suddenly made his exit through the avenue. The game resumed on his return.²³

Low recorded that the weight, which hung below the ring, often rested in a vessel of water to prevent it from swinging too violently. In this case the target, a small ring of ivory, was set revolving by twisting the string.²⁴

Among the Caribou Eskimos, the instrument was hung shoulder height. Both men and women played, using a variety of pointed objects (fork, file without a handle). At a given sign, all the players began to stab at the hole, which resulted in the object which had a large stone suspended below, beginning to swing. Most players wore a mitten on their right hand to avoid getting wounded.²⁵

²³Alpheus S. Packard, The Labrador Coast (New York: N.D.C. Hodges, 1891), p. 254, citing Crantz.

²⁴A. P. Low, op. cit., p. 175.

²⁵Kaj Birket-Smith, op. cit., Vol. V, Pt. 1, p.274.

Harper described a similar game which was played individually. The game apparatus was weighted with steel traps which were held down by the player's foot. The particular player Harper watched was not able to spear the hole, but he was told of other Eskimos who were successful practically every time.²⁶

The games described were shoulder height, so that the players could stand, or about two feet from the ground so that they could sit. Ivory or antler was used for the target piece, which was as short as five centimeters and up to fifteen centimeters long. It contained from one to four holes at which to aim, plus one at each end to which the thong was attached. The spears were wooden or antler, or the players improvised with other equipment. Some were made with ivory or antler heads, joined to wooden shafts, the adjoining surfaces having been pared diagonally and fastened together.²⁷

Nuglutaq was commonly played the day after a shaman seance by the Caribou Eskimos, who then were unable to go hunting. This was "a custom which was observed at

²⁶Francis Harper, Caribou Eskimos of the Upper Kazan River, Keewatin (Kansas: The Allen Press, 1964), p. 22.

²⁷Ibid.

any rate at the coast (in the interior it does not seem to be so strictly observed)".²⁸

The game was played in the Thule culture and related forms were reported from West Greenland and Bering Strait,²⁹ but the distribution was primarily central. The game was reported among the Labrador, Baffin Land, Iglulik, Southampton Island, Caribou, Netsilik, Copper and Mackenzie Eskimos.³⁰ "It was closely associated with the ring and pin game, of which it may have been a variant".³¹

Nuglutaq was played at Baillie especially by children, and also by men and women during the dark days, "for men had little spare time later".³² Boas gave the following description of the game.

A knife is laid down, which forms the stake of the game; and at the word "a'te," all the men try to hit the hole in the tooth with their little sticks. Whoever succeeds in hitting the hole wins the knife. Then he places another stake near by, and the play is resumed, while he himself is

²⁸Kaj Birket-Smith, op. cit., Vol. V, Pt. 1, pp. 271-72.

²⁹Ibid., Pt. 2, p. 119.

³⁰Ibid., p. 290.

³¹Ibid., p. 119.

³²V. Stefansson, The Stefansson-Anderson Arctic Expedition of the American Museum: Preliminary Ethnological Report (Vol. XIV of the Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, 1914), p. 348.

is barred from taking part in the game. Anyone has the right to take hold of the ivory with his naked hand at the risk of having it gashed with the darts of the spears. If two persons hit the hole at the same time, it does not count.³³

Rattles. Stefansson recorded that children played with rattles.

October 1. Rattles. Children at Kettegaryuit used to play with rattles made of ptarmigan crops blown up. The rattle was produced with berries found in the crop. Children were reprimanded for making such playthings out of snared birds. Mam thinks that this taboo applied only in the winter and spring, but is not sure.³⁴

Ring and pin. The cup and ball game was described by Jenness as a "favorite pastime with natives of all ages."³⁵ It was used as a children's toy, an adjunct to the telling of a tale, or as a gambling device.³⁶

The Copper Eskimos use, as a rule, only the bone from the upper arm of the bearded seal. Holes are pierced in both ends of it and in the side of the larger end. The peg is a short pointed stick of bone. The seal-bone is swung counter-clockwise one half revolution, and impaled on the peg in any hole, while the player counts, "thumb, first finger, second finger, third finger, little finger," first

³³Franz Boas, Second Report on the Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay (Vol. XV of the American Museum of Natural History Bulletins, 1907), p. 110.

³⁴V. Stefansson, op. cit., p. 330.

³⁵Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimo op. cit., p. 220.

³⁶Edward Moffat Weyer Jr., The Eskimos: Their Environment and Folkways (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), p. 199.

for the right hand, then for the left. If successful in all ten the player swings the seal-bone one full revolution and catches it on the second, when the game is finished.³⁷

Some Hudson Bay Eskimos used the following verse:

I sleep, I wake, I rise, I light the lamp, I put
on my coat, I put on my boots, I put on my mitts,
my knife I take, I open the door. I go outside,
my knife I take, I look around, I look around again,
I gaze³⁸ I spy, I shoot, I shoot again, I shoot
again.

From the first "I shoot" the seal bone is caught after one and one-half revolutions, and after the last phrase, when the caribou is supposed to be killed, the player says "I am dead". The object was to complete the sequence and be the first to say "I am dead", but if a player missed at any stage, the game was passed to his opponent.³⁹

Birket-Smith described the game among the Caribou Eskimos, where it was taboo for adult women. The pin was held obliquely in the right hand with the point upwards, and the bone piece was swung backwards and forwards and then up when an attempt was made to catch it on the pin. Points were not accumulated, but the player continued until he missed a throw.⁴⁰

³⁷Diamond Jenness, The Life of the Copper Eskimos, op. cit., p. 220.

³⁸Ibid., p. 221.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 276.

The game which Hawkes described among the adult Labrador Eskimos was played using a rabbit's skull, or cone-shaped piece of ivory with a peg of ivory approximately four inches long attached by a thong. There was a definite order to the distribution of holes in the ivory, and also they had to be pierced in order. There was a triple line of holes on the abdomen and sides of an ivory specimen carved to resemble a bear. The player could pierce any of these in the first ten throws. Next he had to pierce a line from the head to the tail. If he missed more than once he had to give the game to another player but, if successful, he continued to play until he missed one.⁴¹

Ring and pin also had a religious significance. Birket-Smith⁴² and Low⁴³ referred to the belief that it would hasten the return of the sun in spring.

Boas reported distinct local types of the ring and pin game. In Labrador, the fox-head and rabbit-head prevailed, while in South Baffin Land the bear was

⁴¹E. W. Hawkes, op. cit., p. 120.

⁴²Kaj Birket-Smith, *The Eskimos* (London: Methuen, 1959), p. 157.

⁴³A. P. Low, op. cit., p. 170.

represented in the game. He found the fish form most common among the Iglulik.⁴⁴ Birket-Smith found the humerus of the bearded seal, and the skull of the hare used among the Caribou Eskimos, but most of their games were made from the antler or toe bones of the caribou. He did not find the form with several toe bones drawn on cords.⁴⁵ From Labrador, Hawkes reported the rabbit's head and cone-shaped piece of ivory.⁴⁶

Mathiassen reported an ivory bear figure from the Iglulik, in addition to the humerus of a bearded seal. He said that the seal scapulae, or carvings in the form of fish, were occasionally used. He also reported on a game for the children, which was made in the form of a bear figure, exactly as an adult one but only 3.5 centimeters long with thirteen holes, and a stick 3 centimeters long. Mathiassen recorded specimens of adult games ranging in size from those of caribou toe bones, which measured from 3.6 to 5.1 centimeters, or those of ivory, which measured 6.6 to 10.1 centimeters, to the games made from the humerus of the bearded seal,

⁴⁴Franz Boas, Second Report on the Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay, op. cit., p. 422.

⁴⁵Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 275.

⁴⁶E. W. Hawkes, op. cit., p. 120.

measuring 13 or 14.7 centimeters. These were attached by cords which generally measured between 15 and 20 centimeters, to pointed bone, or ivory sticks of 5 to 10 centimeters in length.⁴⁷

The ring and pin game was not recorded in the Mackenzie area or in Alaska, except where it appears again among a single Koryak tribe, the Kerek, and in a modified form among the Chukchi. Birket-Smith suggested a relationship between the absence of this and the occurrence of the hoop and pole game.

... the ring-and-pin game... with its diffusion among the Chukchi, Alaskan and Copper Eskimos, fills up the gap between the occurrence of the ring-and-pin game in the east and among the Chukchi and Koryak. It is not the first time that we find an ancient element preserved among the Kerek; we saw it earlier with regard to snow houses and snow knives. We must therefore reckon with the ring-and-pin game as a common Eskimo element. It also occurs in the Thule Culture.⁴⁸

The ring and pin game was recorded among the Labrador, Baffin Land, Iglulik, Southampton Island, Caribou, Netsilik, and Copper Eskimos.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Therkel Mathiassen, Material Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos (Vol. VI, No. 1 of the Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-24, Copenhagen, 1928), p. 219.

⁴⁸Kaj Birket-Smith, The Caribou Eskimos, Vol. V, Pt. 2, op. cit., p. 119.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 290.

II. Discussion

The activities which were described as adapted, were primarily limited by religious taboos. An interesting factor is the frequent mention of these activities as being very old. These activities are also combined with other cultural elements which in later cultures may be considered to be separate from play; story-telling, songs, art (string figures). Dance, although not discussed here, was also carried out in conjunction with many other similar pursuits. Nuglutaq, which Birket-Smith suggested may have been a variant of the ring and pin game, was less involved with religious taboos and other pursuits. It would have been possible to classify it as collective play.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study, descriptions of canadian Eskimo play activities were arranged in five groups. These five groups represented a hypothetical sequence of development, the activities in the first group being the most primitive. Following is a summary of the characteristics of the activities in each group. Wherever possible, the significance of these characteristics is discussed.

I. Summary and Conclusions

1. Observations on experimental play.

a. Eskimo children play as other children play.

From this statement it may be concluded that this child-play is primitive in nature for it has not been culturally changed but it is rather, a basic human phenomenon.

b. Adults were not involved in experimental play activities.

c. Play was primarily individual at the experimental level although a group may have been present and have had some effect upon the individual player.

2. Observations on symbolic play.

a. Symbolic play activities are similar to those of

children today, however possibilities existed for meaningful distinctions. Among these was the occurrence of adult participation in the symbolic activities of the sealing game.

3. Observations on predetermined play.

a. Groups of people were commonly present. This may have some implications for the development of the spectator.

b. Participants were often adults.

c. Activities were primarily tests of physical ability and the test was accomplished or not, without reference to further evaluation of the accomplishment although the difficulty of the task was increased in some cases. The predominance of physical tests was probably a cultural phenomenon, and it has been suggested that environmental factors may be important.¹

d. Symbolism was present in some activities. This may have had some significance for, and relationship to, the development of drama.

e. These activities were less related to everyday

¹George H. Sage, Sport and American Society (Don Mills, Ontario: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1970), p. 184.

life than the experimental and symbolic activities. The importance of the separateness of play from everyday life is frequently referred to today in definitions of play², but possible this is not an essential component of play but a phenomenon which became increasingly prevalent up until the time when play was defined as an attitude.

4. Observations on collective play.
 - a. A minimal number of conventions or rules existed in simple ball games, for solving any problems of interaction, so everyday techniques were probably used. This is an example of closer relationships of the Eskimo play with everyday life, compared with today's play activities (see 3-e above).
 - b. Some activities may have contained the beginnings of standardization such as wrestling, where no tripping was permitted, but as no information was available to indicate that an agreement had been made, the activity was not classified as a standardised activity.
 - c. Special roles were performed by some players who were manipulated by others or who performed a special function for the other players. This may have been

²C. Vendien and J. E. Nixon, The World Today in Health, Physical Education and Recreation (Toronto: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 13.

an elementary form of collective play.

d. Sides were chosen for ball games using the simple devices of sex, season of birth, or camp of residence.

e. Winners and losers were produced from tests.

f. Scores were kept.

g. Payments were made for debts incurred in games.

h. Chance activities were played. It is interesting to note that there were no individual activities with the characteristics found in collective play, however the collective counterpart of activities which are individual in some cultures, such as roulette, did exist in the Eskimo culture. Individual chance activities, or tests of the individual versus the abstract concept of chance, may have developed from collective activities involving chance, once the players recognized that it was not the competitor who defeated them, but the element of chance in the activity which challenged them. There was no evidence to suggest that the Eskimo culture had recognized such an element.

i. Difficulty was added to collective activities as it was added to predetermined activities.

j. Turns, strategy, guessing and matching were observed.

k. Symbolism was seen in some activities and it may have been more important than similar symbolic activities today. In tag, the wolf and raven and hunter may have been quite important in explaining or characterizing the chase (see 5a below).

5. Observations on adapted play.

a. Activities were limited by religious taboos, and associated with story telling, singing and art.

One may ask whether play activities are associated with such cultural phenomena among all primitive peoples. The classification of adapted play was proposed with the view that the development of play had progressed from isolation to incorporation into the cultural phenomena but the evidence presented in this study indicates that almost the reverse is true. The activities which did not provide the basics of food, clothing and shelter may have begun as one integrated form and developed into isolated forms. The disadvantages of maintaining isolation are common knowledge where most phenomena are concerned. Possibly play demonstrates this most clearly, for it has been so isolated and neglected as a useless function that there is a significant lag in knowledge about it.

Dramatic activities have also been isolated and

today, they are reserved for children, professionals, and a few enthusiasts. For others, the drama is a vicarious experience. It may be perpetuating the harm caused by isolation to say that play is separate from ordinary life for play may not be any more separate than other phenomena.

In the Eskimo culture, all the activities which did not contribute to the production of the essentials of food, clothing and shelter, were still incorporated. Thus, one would expect that when teams represented birds, for example, there may have been quite a strong feeling of identification, for the players were not conscious of only playing and not acting, as they are today.

b. Nuglutag was played alone.

c. The activities were frequently referred to as being from the very old Eskimo culture.

This was an exploratory study, and the conclusions are therefore tenuous, but they do provide a basis for further investigation. Experimental and symbolic play activities were primarily children's activities as they are today. They may have been important for adults of earlier cultures. In predetermined activities, the separation of play activities from everyday life was developed to the extent that some

of the activities had no relationship to the maintenance of physical necessities (food, clothing and shelter), but in tests of strength, the establishment of social relationships was probably quite important in everyday life. Collective activities were less related to everyday life than predetermined activities but the result of the activity, for example, the meaning of winning or the prize for winning, was very important for everyday life. A man may have won a knife or lost his wife and if the team of persons born in winter won the tug-of-war, it meant that there would be plenty of food; otherwise there was to be bad weather.

7. The adapted activities do not display characteristics much more separate from everyday life than the collective play activities did. They are an example of activities with a meaning attached, such as the tug-of-war above.

II. Recommendations

Two types of studies are necessary to further define the development of play: Longitudinal studies (from primitive to contemporary play) will demonstrate the sequence of development, and cross-cultural studies are necessary to separate the factors which are cultural

from those which are developmental. Characteristics which appear constantly describe the basic nature of play.

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